



Docherty, Vincent John (1984) The reception of Heimito von Doderer as exemplified by the critics' response to Ein Mord den jeder Bericht and Die Merowinger. PhD thesis.

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THE RECEPTION OF HEIMITO VON DODERER AS EXEMPLIFIED

BY THE CRITICS' RESPONSE TO

EIN MORD DEN JEDER BEGEHT AND DIE MEROWINGER

TWO VOLUMES

BY

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW IN THE FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

JUNE 1984

VOLUME ONE

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## Acknowledgements

I should like to record my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Roderick Watt, for his constant readiness to provide constructive criticism of my work.

I also gratefully remember the late Dr Konradin Zeller of the Biederstein Verlag, Munich, who allowed me unlimited access to the Doderer archive there. Further thanks are due to all the radio stations in West Germany, Austria and Switzerland, for permission to quote from the unpublished radio broadcasts in the Doderer archive. I should also like to thank Professor Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler for giving me permission to work on the Doderer archive in Vienna.

I am also grateful to the Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen and the Österreichischer Rundfunk, for providing a copy of the manuscript and the reviews of Claus Hubalek's television adaptation of Ein Mord den jeder begeht.

For some fascinating information and advice, I should particularly like to thank Doderer's sister, Frau Astrid von Stummer-Doderer.

I also wish to express my thanks to the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst and to the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, without whose financial assistance this work could never have been completed.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to my wife, Gabrielle, for her invaluable help in the checking of details in the final stage of revision.

## Note

In the quotations in the text, orthographical idiosyncrasies have been left unaltered. Thus American spellings are to be found in the quotations from the United States. In addition, the somewhat haphazard use of 'ss' and 'ß' by the critics and not least by Doderer himself, has been maintained for the sake of authenticity.

In the footnotes, places of publication of books, periodicals and newspapers have been given in the native form for reasons of consistency with the bibliography.

## SUMMARY

The primary impulse for this dissertation was the striking disparity between the initial critical reaction to Doderer's works in the 1950s and early 1960s, and the long-term evaluation of his literary stature.

In the Introduction, an outline of the theoretical foundations of the study is followed by a brief survey of the academic criticism devoted to Doderer. This survey attempts to establish whether the 'new beginning' in Doderer criticism inspired in the mid-1970s by Anton Reininger and Hans Joachim Schröder has succeeded in clearing the way for a more balanced approach to Doderer's work. The survey reveals, however, that recent Doderer criticism has seen an alarming increase of interest in Doderer the man, as opposed to Doderer the writer.

Chapter One is devoted to the reception accorded to Doderer's Ein Mord den jeder begeht. The critical reaction to Doderer's novel can be directly linked to suggestions made by his publishers in their 'Verlagsprospekt' as to how the novel ought to be read, namely as anything but a detective novel. A detailed examination of Doderer's use of motifs familiar from detective fiction indicates that the author so consistently 'breaks the rules' of classical detective story writing that Ein Mord den jeder begeht might justifiably be regarded as a forerunner of the parodies of the detective novel so common in modern literature. An examination of Doderer's novel in the context of its first publication in 1938 reveals how uncannily closely the detective element in Ein Mord den jeder begeht resembles the official Nazi line on detective fiction, and this throws up the vexed question of whether Doderer's 'anti-detective novel' was an attempt to placate the Nazi censor. However, a comparison with Friedrich Dürrenmatt's anti-detective stories shows that the ideol-

ogy of the irrational which informs Doderer's novel is not necessarily fascistic in nature, as some of Doderer's critics imply.

A brief 'Excursus' on Claus Hubalek's television adaptation of Ein Mord den jeder begeht is intended to illustrate the difficulties involved in transferring Doderer's work to a visual medium. The critics' reactions to Hubalek's play provide a useful up-to-date picture of Doderer's current literary standing.

In Chapter Two, the focus is turned on the critical response provoked by Doderer's most controversial work, Die Merowinger. The outrageous plot and 'scurrilous' style of this novel present the reviewer with an unenviable dilemma, for he is confronted with a new work by a major literary figure which does not conform with the pattern of the author's past successes. The survey of the reception of Die Merowinger is intended to illuminate how the reviewers were so prejudiced by their familiarity with what many regard as a 'Viennese trilogy', Die Strudlhofstiege, Die erleuchteten Fenster and Die Dämonen, that they were unable to arrive at a reasonably open-minded evaluation of Die Merowinger. The key problem in Doderer reception is the identification of the author with the image of an amiable Viennese raconteur. An examination of the reception of Doderer's works in America reveals that the author's very conscious 'Vienneseness' presents a major obstacle for many non-Austrian readers, and accounts to a large extent for the accusations of parochialism not infrequently levelled at Doderer. Yet, paradoxically, it is undoubtedly to his realistic depictions of Vienna, allied to an apparently apolitical ideology, that Doderer's success in the 1950s must be attributed.

In view of the grossly oversimplified identification of Doderer with the image of the chronicler of Vienna, and the increasing politicization of literature in the 1960s, it is perhaps understandable that Doderer has gradually become little more than a peripheral figure in German

literature today.

The dissertation is supplemented by a Doderer-bibliography of some 1,955 titles. Although it makes no claims to be comprehensive, the bibliography is nevertheless a first attempt to collate the diverse material on Doderer which can be found in the archives in Munich and Vienna.

## INTRODUCTION

### I Methodological Considerations      CONSIDERATIONS OF METHOD.

The very mention of the word 'reception' in the context of modern literary criticism, and more particularly with reference to contemporary German literary scholarship, inevitably conjures up a semantic muddle which no doubt reflects a certain methodological uncertainty and hence necessitates a closer definition of the terms of reference. Yet before looking at the myriad connotations aroused by the vague and somewhat ambiguous term 'reception', it might be fruitful to recall the historical background against which a proliferation of related, but at times contradictory terms such as 'Rezeptionsforschung', 'Rezeptionsästhetik', 'Rezeptionsgeschichte', 'Wirkungsästhetik' and 'Wirkungsgeschichte' (the latter with its own vague implications such as 'Einflußgeschichte', 'Reputationsgeschichte' and 'Publikumsgeschichte') took place.

Viewed from afar, the recent squabbles in literary criticism might

easily be attributed to a great and apparently irrevocable schism which has split the ranks of the critics into two major, diametrically opposed camps. On the one hand, from the 1950s on, those whom their opponents refer to somewhat disparagingly as 'formalists', represented by the New Criticism and its belated German equivalent 'textimmanente Interpretation', have subscribed to the belief in the essential 'autonomy' and 'timelessness' of the work of art as the only guarantee of true 'objectivity' in criticism. For them only what is inherent in the work of art is 'public';<sup>1</sup> all extraneous determinants such as the social and historical background against which the work was written, or the media of distribution and reception are, curiously enough, 'private or idiosyncratic'<sup>2</sup> and do nothing to illuminate our understanding of the work itself, since critical inquiries are not settled by consulting the oracle, or, in this case, the author.

On the other hand, in the wake of the huge upsurge in the popularity of the social sciences, the 'empiricists', or 'positivists', as their adversaries prefer to call them, have insisted on the efficacy of 'empirical' scholarship, best represented by the sociology of literature, which, in an attempt to liberate modern criticism from its self-imposed constraints, focuses on literary phenomena as components in a real historical process which goes on all around them.

The weaknesses of both extremes are self-evident. Extreme 'text-immanente Interpretation' is liable to lead to total impressionism, a private response that means little or nothing to others and is therefore unshareable and idiosyncratic. More importantly, it is difficult to imagine that even those theorists who propose this sort of criticism can exclude all extrinsic information (conscious and unconscious) from their approach to the work. Conversely, the (albeit understandable) reaction to such apparently irrelevant and irrational esotericism in

which the 'self-existent' work is contemplated in isolation from society in a peaceful but illusory idyll, is the tendency towards an empirical sociology of literature, in which the statistics and political and sociological analyses divert our attention from the work itself. The results of such literary sociology have frequently been curiously disproportionate to the amount of intellectual energy invested in it, and the tendency to 'talk round' the text has meant that the ultimate aim of literary interpretation - a better understanding of the work - has often been neglected.

In the light of such palpable methodological inadequacies, an eclectic approach commends itself as both pragmatic and judicious. One attempt to bridge the gap between the two poles of thought came from the literary historian Hans Robert Jauss in his inaugural lecture at Constance in 1967. Although Jauss specifically set out to lay the ground for a new approach to literary history,<sup>3</sup> his monograph Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft is nonetheless a seminal work in the contemporary discussion on the history and 'aesthetics' of reception and is worthy of attention here.

Basically a hermeneuticist, Jauss nevertheless rejects the traditional hermeneutic view that the interpreter should disregard himself and his own standpoint in order to take in the 'objective' meaning of the text, and insists that the reader's 'disposition' is predisposed by signals in the text (open and concealed), by familiar motifs from, and allusions to works he has already read, in short, by a veritable 'horizon of expectations', even as he approaches the work for the first time. The work is no longer conceived as an isolated and timeless object which yields one given and objectifiable meaning, but as a polyvalent potentiality dependent on the dialogue with the reader, whose view of the work is, in turn, subject to historical and social



determinants. By means of a combined synchronic and diachronic approach, Jauss hopes to achieve an 'ereignishafte Geschichte der Literatur',<sup>4</sup> to illuminate the 'historicity' of the work. More importantly, he maintains that the social function of literature, which is fundamental to his aesthetics, can best be revealed in the interaction of the triad of author, work and reader, and that this is manifest most unequivocally where the literary experience so impinges on the reader that his view of the world, indeed his social behaviour is affected. Jauss argues that the system of relationships and expectations which can be ascertained for every work by viewing it in the context of the historical moment of its publication is objectifiable and empirically reconstructable. Jauss implies that the reconstruction of the horizon of expectations into which the work entered at the time of its appearance for its contemporary reader enables us to reconstrue the questions to which the text was an answer, which is particularly important where the intention of the author is not available or accessible, since only in this way is it possible to understand the text 'aus seiner Intention und Zeit heraus'.<sup>5</sup> Even more significantly, Jauss concludes that by reconstructing the horizon of expectations we can determine the aesthetic value of the work, insofar as the smaller the distance between the reader's expectations and the actuality of the work, the less the reader is required to re-think his position and reflect on new experiences, the closer the work is to what he calls, using Brecht's term, 'culinary' or 'trivial' literature,<sup>6</sup> in which the text fully converges with the reader's expectations and demands. This would appear to be a somewhat involved way of suggesting that novelty or originality is the criterion of aesthetic excellence.

The cogency of Jauss's argument is as debatable as is the position

of the extremists on either side, but his propositions were singularly fruitful in that the multifarious reactions to them encapsulate the galaxy of viewpoints which characterizes the discussion today. In essence, Jauss was attacked on two fronts: by the 'immanent' critics on his basic premise of the relevance of reception for the understanding of the text, and, on the other hand, by the 'empiricists' on the practicability of his theories.

It is clear that Jauss's idea of historical perspective is curiously analagous to the intentionalism of Benedetto Croce, which, the latter claims, enables us to see the work of art 'as its author saw it at the moment of production'.<sup>7</sup> The arch-isolationists Wimsatt and Beardsley have rightly drawn our attention to the difference between the author's intention to do something and the actual accomplishment of that intention in the text, and few would deny the validity of their argument that the design or intention of an author is not desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art.<sup>8</sup> The critics' tendency to 'leave the poem for the poet' has, as we shall see in due course, been responsible for many of the ethical value judgements that have vitiated much of the relatively recent criticism of Doderer. Yet, while one must acknowledge the value of Wimsatt's and Beardsley's differentiation between intention and achievement, one must not fall into the trap of accepting the popular version of their doctrine, which insists that what an author intended is irrelevant to the meaning of his text. E. D. Hirsch has argued convincingly that any conception of the meaning of a text as variable or autonomous and independent of the author's intention necessarily precludes the possibility of valid interpretation, since it opens the door to subjectivism and relativism.<sup>9</sup> From the point of view of reception analysis, it would be impossible to justify criticizing any single interpretation

of a text if one did not assume that it could be proved that this interpretation was in some way inadequate. This can only be achieved if one uses all the available evidence, both intrinsic and extrinsic, to show that a given interpretation is more probable than others. The formalist objection that a consideration of any extrinsic reference undermines and relativizes the value of the work of art, and that concentrating exclusively on the text is the only 'true and objective way of criticism',<sup>10</sup> is ultimately a matter of basic conviction. If, however, one concedes that an isolated contemplation of the purity of the verbal icon and the internal relations of the text alone does not exhaust the potentialities of the work of art - and this is the basic precept of the following study - then it is possible, without denying the aesthetic integrity of the work, to allow for a cautious consideration of non-aesthetic determinants in the exegetic process. The methodological objections which have attended the prolonged debate on Jauss's theories consequently take on all the more significance here.

The most consistent criticism levelled at Jauss by the empiricists is that he turns the attention away from the work towards the reader without creating any concrete connection with social reality.<sup>11</sup> Hence, his whole conception of the reconstruction of the reader's horizon of expectations is defeatingly abstract. Jauss's vision of the reader is both vague and speculative, and this 'ideal' reader is not identifiable with any individual recipient and his cultural, political, social and historical determinants. In an attempt to clarify the author—reader relationship, German literary scholarship has succeeded in merely obfuscating matters still further by introducing a plethora of descriptions such as 'der ideale Leser', 'der gedachte Leser', 'der imaginierte Leser', 'der intentionale Leser', 'der implizite Leser', 'der immanente Leser', 'der konzeptionelle Leser', 'der fiktive Leser' and 'der fingierte Leser'.

Behind the esoteric camouflage is a desire to differentiate between the actual living reader and the fictional reader as conceived of and/or addressed by the author (directly or indirectly) in the text. It is obvious that from the point of view of the 'aesthetics' of reception it is the actual historical reader who is of most significance, insofar as his reactions can be ascertained or reconstructed. Yet it is precisely here that one of the major methodological problems of reception analysis is encountered. For it is equally evident that, since there is no such thing as 'the' reader per se, and it is equally impossible to recover the experience of a total readership, 'the' historical horizon of expectations cannot be objectified, but must remain a subjective speculation. Consequently, the interaction between the work and its recipient can only be ascertained on the basis of individual readers' reactions, and this is, in turn, as literary sociologists suggest, only feasible in the context of empirical reader research and reader sociology. It has been argued with some justification that this is a matter for advertising consultants rather than literary critics, but, be that as it may, it is inevitably only practicable in the present, and this, of course, undermines the very basis of Jauss's argument.

Occasional attempts at a characterization of Doderer's readership have, however, been undertaken. As early as 1956, Arnolt Bronnen said of Die Dämonen: 'Das Buch war teuer, und es war dick. Da es teuer war, wurde es von den Snobs gekauft, da es aber dick war, wurde es nicht einmal von den Käufern gelesen.'<sup>12</sup> And twenty years later Hans Joachim Schröder maintained that Doderer's popularity in the 1950s and early 1960s was restricted to the 'Bildungsbürgertum'.<sup>13</sup> Such unsubstantiated speculations are of relevance only insofar as they reveal the critics' own ideological prejudices; they tell us nothing of the

complex composition of a real readership, and, more to the point, direct our attention away from Doderer's work rather than towards it.

Yet, ironically, such a shift in emphasis away from the object (work) towards the subject (recipient) is precisely what empirically orientated German reception theorists have demanded since the 1960s. In the name of a 'democratization' of literature and an 'emancipation' of the reader, and in an attempt to break out of the 'ivory tower of "Germanistik"',<sup>14</sup> which had become an end in itself, the empiricists envisaged reception 'aesthetics' as part of an all-embracing communicative process, an interdisciplinary approach with pretensions to a 'global methodological unity of the empirical sciences'.<sup>15</sup> For this reason, Jauss is criticized not only for the lack of sociological differentiation in his conception of the reader, but also for his monistic concentration on the reception side<sup>16</sup> and for remaining locked up on the literary level, a mortal sin in the eyes of the empiricists, yet a paradoxical objection to what is, after all, supposed to be 'literary' criticism. There is a clear temptation in literary sociology to divorce the literary work itself from the sociological enquiry and to override the text by concentrating on considerations that obscure its own unique and essentially poetic quality. This can lead to a strongly process-orientated conception of reception analysis, in which demoscopic research focuses on the reader with the text as a mediator, and one cannot help wondering whether such an approach does not run the risk of disqualifying itself altogether as a mode of literary study. There is no doubt some justification in Wimsatt's vision of the 'dreary and antiseptic laboratory',<sup>17</sup> in which the 'psychogalvanic reflex' of readers subjected to a certain text is 'coolly' measured, since it is considered to be of more value than the researcher's own response to the text. As long as literary sociologists insist on

operating outside the text and propounding theories which are at every point scientifically testable, they must expect and accept the criticism that they are attempting to find the ultimate meaning of literature in something that is not literature.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, sociologists of literature would do well to acknowledge the peripheral importance, in terms of practical, demonstrable social values, of literature in any society.

Yet it is one thing to employ extra-literary criteria to illustrate what literary sociologists call the 'use-value' of the book as a commodity, or to reflect on the didactic or social function of literature, as the empiristics do. It is quite another to widen the purview of literary criticism to accommodate what Northrop Frye calls a 'sense of context'.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, reception analysis can be launched on such a broad basis that it is necessary to delineate clearly the goals of one's research. The semantic muddle mentioned at the beginning of this chapter derives primarily from the failure of academics to use the rather convoluted terminology consistently. For the sake of clarity, it would be worthwhile to recall precisely what is generally understood by the various terms listed at the beginning of this chapter and to relate them to our own conception of 'reception analysis'.

The rather vague 'Rezeptionsforschung' is a catchall heading under which any sort of research into the relationship between text and reader can be subsumed, although it tends to imply that the recipient rather than the text is taken as the starting point for the research. Of the various other terms employed to describe the diverse forms of research analysis, the older labels 'Rezeptionsgeschichte' and 'Wirkungsgeschichte' are undoubtedly the least problematic. Traditional 'Rezeptionsgeschichte' is generally understood as a straightforward description of the history

of the various documented responses to a work of art, and is sometimes also called 'Urteilsgeschichte'. Traditional 'Wirkungsgeschichte', on the other hand, seeks to illuminate the 'influence' of a work on its readers, on other artists, or on society as a whole, and is occasionally referred to as 'Beeinflussungsgeschichte'.

More recent developments in the study of the relationship between text and reader have seen the spawning of a large number of new technical terms, the most important of which are 'Rezeptionsästhetik' and 'Wirkungsästhetik'. Moreover, under the influence of the new terminology, some of the older terms have been subjected to a shift in meaning. Thus 'Wirkungsgeschichte' has come to be used for research which is aimed at relating the various receptions accorded to a literary work to the literary, political, historical and ideological determinants which influenced these interpretations.<sup>20</sup> 'Wirkungsanalyse', on the other hand, is a relatively new label for empirical research of reader reactions to a particular text, usually carried out with the help of questionnaires. It is, however, the fairly recent coinings 'Rezeptionsästhetik' and 'Wirkungsästhetik' that give rise most frequently to misunderstandings. One major obstacle to a proper understanding of the two concepts lies in the fact that, their quite distinct provenances notwithstanding, the terms are frequently used more or less synonymously. The concept of 'Rezeptionsästhetik' was first introduced into literary theory by Jauss in the inaugural lecture at Constance University discussed earlier in this chapter. The term 'Wirkungsästhetik', on the other hand, was coined by Harald Weinrich in an essay 'Für eine Literaturgeschichte des Lesers'.<sup>21</sup> Jauss's own use of the concept of 'Rezeptionsästhetik' is extremely vague, but he more recently indicated that what he meant by it was the 'methodische Reflexion' on which his new conception of literary history was to be

founded.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, Weinrich, while acknowledging the sociological dimension in the relationship between text and readership, used the term 'Wirkungsästhetik' to refer to the role of the reader as a structural function of the text.<sup>23</sup> Wolfgang Iser, who developed and expanded this aspect of Weinrich's concept of 'Wirkungsästhetik' in his own theory of the 'implied reader', expressly differentiated between 'Rezeptionsästhetik' and 'Wirkungsästhetik': 'Eine Wirkungstheorie ist im Text verankert - eine Rezeptionstheorie in den historischen Urteilen der Leser.'<sup>24</sup> Yet this rigid distinction has rarely been adopted by academics. On the contrary, Hannelore Link, in her now standard introduction to 'Rezeptionsforschung', categorically rejects Jauss's use of the term 'Rezeptionsästhetik', choosing instead to subsume his theory under the category 'Rezeptionsgeschichte'.<sup>25</sup> More importantly, Link uses the term 'Rezeptionsästhetik' to describe Iser's theory of the implied reader, and explicitly counts Iser among the founders of 'Rezeptionsästhetik'.<sup>26</sup>

In the circumstances, it would seem advisable to reject the German terminology as confused and confusing, and to adhere to the deliberately vague English term 'reception analysis'. It is not, however, the purpose of this study to indulge in an examination of the 'influence' of Doderer's works, nor do we propose to undertake a sociological or empirical analysis of Doderer's readership. Even for the researcher whose attention is focused from the outset on the reception accorded to a work, the ultimate goal of his research ought to be a better understanding of the work itself. An approach to interpretation which combines reception analysis with textual analysis can illuminate the dialectical interplay of aesthetic and non-aesthetic factors in the relationship of a text to its surrounding reality.

For all its weaknesses, Jauss's theory of reception analysis does



offer a number of concrete advantages. It sharpens our awareness of the mutability of the significance of the individual literary work within the historical process, which is of particular relevance to Doderer reception. Furthermore, Jauss's idea of the hermeneutic difference between the previous and present understanding of a work, one of the fundamental concepts of reception theory, can also be of great value, provided his vague conception of 'the' readership is replaced by an empirically attestable group of recipients, as we shall see in due course. Finally, Jauss's theory contains the potential 'for exploding certain myths about the true communal significance of revered cultural monuments'<sup>27</sup> by emphasizing the historicity of the prevailing canon of 'high literature'. If such considerations are used as a complement to, rather than a substitute for textual analysis, a truly 'synthetic' approach to literary interpretation is possible.

One of the dangers inherent in most forms of reception research is the temptation simply to catalogue the critical voices and, as it were, allow the critics to speak for themselves in an ideologically neutral criticism.<sup>28</sup> Yet if one wants to proceed beyond mere description and provide explanations and evaluations, one must inquire into the relations which exist between the work and its reception. In short, it is the duty of the researcher to scrutinize the appropriateness and stringency of the various interpretations, which must be justified by the properties of the text. Moreover, reception analysis which uses documented criticism as the basis of its research will inevitably point towards the misunderstandings and distortions which pervade the reviews. Hence, far from merely indulging in vague sociological speculation, such reception analysis will support the argument in favour of criticism more precisely focused on the details of the text itself. Some attention will, of course, have to be paid to the extra-literary

determinants which often play a more constitutive role in the establishment of literary canons than is generally admitted. Such considerations should not, however, be allowed to deflect our attention from the primacy of the literary work itself.

## II Extraneous Influences

Of the manifold factors outwith the text which can help to determine the literary ranking of an author, which is, of course, a matter of image and publicity rather than literary quality, the production side is most easily overlooked. Yet the control over the means of literary production is a key position highly susceptible to manipulation, corruption and abuse. The publisher's reputation, the size of an edition, the very external form of a book and the quality of the paper used, and not least the price of the work are all indicative of the potential audience envisaged by the publisher, and can, to some extent, help to predetermine the course of the reception of the work.

Doderer's relationship to his various publishers, from his fellow POW-internee Rudolf Haybach to Gustav End of Beck/Biederstein, is generally thought to have been an exemplary case of harmonious partnership and cooperation. Ilse Strobl-Luckmann, Doderer's Austrian publisher, who financed the final years of Die Strudlhofstiege, was such a close friend of the author's that she invited him to be a witness at her wedding.<sup>29</sup> Gustav End relates how the mutual respect between him and Doderer soon developed into a lasting friendship,<sup>30</sup> and Horst Wiemer,

reader at Biederstein, describes Doderer as anything but a difficult author<sup>31</sup> and recounts the solitary serious difference of opinion he had with Doderer, which in the end resulted in a consolidation of their friendship.<sup>32</sup> Doderer himself describes his publisher as his 'dear friend and comrade in arms',<sup>33</sup> and, despite his habitual reluctance to impart autobiographical details, provides a potted history of his tortuous road to one of the most renowned publishing houses in Germany:

... Ich saß 1936, aus Wien gekommen, verzweifelt in einer Atelierwohnung an der Münchener Peripherie. Nach Deutschland war ich gekommen, um dort einen Verleger zu finden. Meine bisherigen in Wien hatten ihre Tätigkeit eingestellt. ... Ich saß also in der Nähe von München und hatte nach wenigen Wochen bereits ein Bild des literarischen Deutschland von 1936. Es war niederschmetternd. Zu München, in einer Gesellschaft, begegnete mir ein aus dem Kaukasus stammender Maler, der Halil Beg Mussayassul hieß. Am Heimwege, auf der Plattform der Linie 3, machte er mich auf die C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung aufmerksam. Jedoch, ich war zu ermüdet und zu vergraut von dem, was ich in Deutschland in dieser kurzen Zeit gesehen hatte, um dem Wink zu folgen. Ein Freund, Herr Rudolf Haybach, der aus Wien kam, um mich zu besuchen, tat es statt meiner. Er war mein allererster Verleger gewesen, der meiner frühen drei Bücher nämlich, hatte sich jedoch seit 1930 einer anderen Tätigkeit zugewandt. Von Wien aus sandte er einige meiner erschienenen Bücher und später auch ein Manuskript an den Verlag Beck. Man schrieb ihm von dort, daß man lebhaft wünsche, mit mir die Verbindung aufzunehmen. Freilich war man überrascht, mich dann in nächster Nähe zu wissen. Im Arbeitszimmer des Lektors Horst Wiemer habe ich im September 1937 mündlich ein Exposé von Ein Mord den jeder begeht gegeben. Die Dämonen, deren erster Teil im Manuskript fertig vorlag, wollte ich dem Verlag gar nicht zumuten. Dieses Buch wäre ja unter den damaligen Verhältnissen unpublizierbar gewesen. Und nun verließ nicht der

Autor, sondern der Verleger mit einem energischen und raschen Schritte den Boden der Zweckmäßigkeit und vertraute sich dem Boden der Providenz an: die Rechte auf Die Dämonen wurden erworben (offenbar hatte im rückwärtigen Trakt des Verlagspalais die Pythia ein kleines Arbeitszimmer), der mündlich exponierte Roman erschien bereits im folgenden Jahr und im nächsten jenes Manuskript, das mein Freund Haybach aus Wien gesandt hatte (Ein Umweg). ... Es folgte diesem Septembertag des Jahres 1937 eine Zeit glücklichster Zusammenarbeit mit Horst Wiemer und der Lektorin Dr. Luise Laporte, einer unersetzlichen Persönlichkeit, der ich auch späterhin und bis zu ihrem Tode in Bewunderung verbunden blieb. Jetzt aber kam der Krieg, und ich mußte einrücken. Als die ganze Katastrophe in der Weise abgelaufen war, wie es die Pythia in ihrem kleinen Filialbüro in der Wilhelmstraße vorausgesagt hatte, war die Bahn für Die Dämonen frei. Wieder von Wien aus, durch meinen noch heute mit mir arbeitenden Lizenz-Verlag I. Luckmann ..., wurde die Verbindung mit München aufgenommen. Ich hatte inzwischen Die Strudlhofstiege geschrieben: der Verlag I. Luckmann hatte es mir ermöglicht. Die Belletristik bildete jetzt in der C. H. Beck'schen Verlagsbuchhandlung eine selbständige Sektion, die bald ein eigener Verlag wurde, unter der Leitung des Herrn Gustav End, welchen ich, neben Herrn Dr. Heinrich Beck, nun gleichfalls als meinen Verleger betrachten darf. Die literarischen Sachen lagen und liegen heute noch in den Händen Horst Wiemers. Mit den genannten Herren verbinden mich Jahre der Zusammenarbeit und Freundschaft. ...<sup>34</sup>

It would appear, then, that once in the tender care of the Biederstein Verlag Doderer was able to devote all his energy to his artistic production, yet some of his published diary entries are strangely at variance with the picture of harmonious solidarity traditionally painted, and indicate that he had perhaps a somewhat more ambivalent relationship to his publisher than we are generally led to believe:

Darum erzähle ich keine 'Handlungen' mehr, wie meine Verleger sie gerne hatten ...<sup>35</sup>

Diesem ganzen literarischen Betrieb - dem kommerziellen nicht nur, sondern auch dem Geltungs-Betrieb - genug zu tun ist für einen Künstler ganz und gar unmöglich. Besser - man vertraute seine Dinge der Schublade an; sie ist vertrauenswürdiger und würdiger überhaupt wie jedweder Verlag. Mögen die Verleger ihre Bücher selber schreiben: sie werden dann wenigstens erhalten, was sie eigentlich wünschen. Könnte es doch zu einem Rückzug der Autoren von den Verlagen kommen! Könnten wir doch andere modi des materiellen Existierens finden! Wir sammelten uns einen Schatz, den nicht Rost und Motten fräßen.<sup>36</sup>

It was evidently the business side of literature to which Doderer was unwilling or unable to accommodate himself:

Nur ein vollkommen neues Werk kann auch vor dem Betrieb in der Literatur retten, welchem man mit allen getanen Sachen verfallen bleibt.<sup>37</sup>

In der Tiefe der Anatomie des Augenblicks erschien heute eine Warnung vor der Routine. Kein Zweifel, ich habe mich in diesem Jahre 1955 einer Reihe von essayistischen Pflichten in routinierter Weise entledigt, und wie ein genau passendes Zahnrad in den literarischen Betrieb eingegriffen, mehr selbst gedreht als drehend.<sup>38</sup>

Geschäftliches: Gestern hab' ich von einem hiesigen Verlag [in Vienna] einen größeren Geldbetrag entgegengenommen und die Zusicherung einer monatlichen Rente.

Wenngleich meine finanzielle Situation unhaltbar geworden war, empfand ich doch, nach Abschluß dieser Sache, nicht jene Erleichterung, die zu erwarten gewesen wäre. Der Vorschuß auf noch nicht getane Heldentaten bereitete mir Unbehagen. Und zugleich das Bewußtsein vom geringeren Werte der nur ziffernmäßig stattlichen Summe, die ich empfangen hatte. ... Die Strudlhofstiege - dieses noch nicht geborene Kind hab' ich

gestern verhandelt, nebst zwei anderen Büchern, von denen nur eines schon existiert - sie ist jetzt materiell vorbelastet, so wie einst Ein Mord den jeder begeht in seinen Anfängen belastet wurde durch meinen Vertrag mit C. H. Beck im September des Jahres 1937. Was nach solchen unvermeidlichen Abmachungen zurückbleibt, ist das Gefühl eines geordneten Vakuums, dadurch, daß man sozusagen ein Geheimnis preisgegeben hat. Der Verleger ist interessierter Mitwisser geworden. 1937 war mir bei solchem Stande der Dinge wohler als heute. Ich betrachtete meinen Vertrag mit der C. H. Beck'schen Verlagsbuchhandlung als eine Art Erfolg.<sup>39</sup>

The significance of Doderer's quixotic defiance of the exigencies of the literary 'industry' lies in the fact that it influenced his production both directly and indirectly. His immediate response was a refusal to pay lip service any longer to a system in which the purity of the aesthetic product had been tainted by market-place economics: 'Die Stiege soll der letzte Roman sein, den ich - so wie Ein Mord im Jahre 1937 - verkauft habe, bevor er noch existierte, also gewissermaßen "ab Gehirn". Ich will aus dem literarischen Markt und mir eine Stellung suchen auf Grund meiner wissenschaftlichen Ausbildung - und zur Vollendung derselben.'<sup>40</sup> Although Doderer's two year excursion into the academic field at the 'Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung' did not result in an abnegation of his artistic vocation, he was nevertheless convinced that his writing suffered: 'Ja, nun stell' ich es fest: ich beginne mich nach den zwei Jahren am Institut - während welcher doch vielfach Fremdes sich qualitätslos in mir herumflegelte - zu erholen, auch meine Schrift beginnt sich zu erholen.'<sup>41</sup> Moreover, Doderer's very conception of academic studies, which found its reflection in Die Dämonen but also in the caustic satire and the pseudo-scientific footnotes of Die Merowinger, was characterized, as

Schmidt-Dengler rightly suggests, perhaps more than the author himself would have liked, by his own experiences at the 'Institut'.<sup>42</sup> Already the influence of extra-literary factors in the productive process is manifest.

Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, Doderer's public 'image' was carefully manipulated by his publisher. Georg Schmid maintains: 'Doderer war einer der letzten Schriftsteller, die sich ein so "publicity-scheues" Leben leisten konnten; heute zählt mehr denn je das Image statt des Œuvres.'<sup>43</sup> Yet despite the author's obvious reluctance to be party to public relations exercises - 'Zurück von Frankfurt. Die propagandistischen Pflichten dem Verlag gegenüber erfüllt'<sup>44</sup> - he nevertheless frequently appeared in public in the guise of the literary outsider, the 'Kauz', and, above all, the 'Ur-Österreicher', all elements of a facile and superficial image with which the author was all too easily identified and which, as we shall see, no doubt contributed to an ossification of expectations on the part of his critics, which, in turn, vitiated much of the criticism of his 'non-Viennese' novels. One critic depicts vividly the oratorical style adopted by Doderer for his public readings: 'in breitem, die "entern Grind" überakzentuierenden Wienerisch und nach allen Regeln der Kunst gestikulierend.'<sup>45</sup> One only has to compare Franz Hubmann's pictures in the 1967 edition of the Viennese periodical Protokolle to realize the accuracy of this description.<sup>46</sup>

If the image created partly by the publisher's public relations machinery and evidently nurtured by the author himself was to play no small part in the reception of Doderer's works, an equally crucial role must be accorded to an extraneous factor whose influence is often underestimated, if not overlooked altogether: the 'Verlagsprospekt'. Gone are the days when authors felt obliged to preface their works with

long-winded pleas for forbearance on the part of the reviewer;<sup>47</sup> instead, the critic's task is pre-empted in this 'information leaflet' which accompanies the reviewer's copy of a work. The carefully worded texts are frequently reproduced verbatim in smaller newspapers, and even the more discerning literary critics are, as we shall see, often (perhaps not consciously) prejudiced in their judgements by the publisher's propaganda, so that there is some justification in Olaf Schwencke's question: 'Hat Literaturkritik im allgemeinen Kulturbetrieb gegenüber der Werbung überhaupt noch einen Sinn?'<sup>48</sup>

Yet, despite Bernhard Zimmermann's emphasis on the 'minimal significance' of literary criticism<sup>49</sup> - in 1958 only 2.4% of the adult population of West Germany regularly read a national daily with up-to-date and competent information on cultural life - and despite the insistence of the literary sociologist Robert Escarpit that the literary critic's influence on potential readers is of less relevance than that of the bookseller or of personal acquaintances,<sup>50</sup> the feuilletonist in the daily and weekly press nevertheless fulfils a vital intermediary role between the author and the reader. And since he writes primarily for his own readers rather than for the benefit of the author, the literary critic is clearly in a position of power with great potential for manipulating his admittedly small, but usually influential readership. Escarpit asserts that it is of no consequence whatsoever whether a review is favourable or not, since the important thing is that the book is reviewed, and a 'scathing' review can sometimes earn the author a fortune;<sup>51</sup> but, such mercenary commercial considerations notwithstanding, it is much more likely that a work praised in the reviews as a masterpiece will enter as such the critical consciousness of readers who never find the time or inclination to read it, since, as Escarpit himself points out, much of our knowledge of



literature is necessarily from hearsay, as it is impossible to read everything;<sup>52</sup> conversely, those who do buy a book after reading a review are often so prejudiced by what they have read that their own assessment simply coincides with the pre-given suggestions. That the literary critic himself is susceptible to manipulation by the publishers is, as we shall see, one of the most alarming aspects of contemporary literary life.

Moreover, as Felix Vodička rightly suggests,<sup>53</sup> the literary critic occupies a unique position in the literary system. Wolfgang Iser's contention that a text is not in itself a literary or aesthetic work, but merely a potential effect 'realized' or 'actualized' by the individual reader, has been readily adopted by many empiricists as a justification for empirical reader research, since it is the reader alone who can 'complete' the meaning of a text. Yet it is difficult to disengage oneself from the belief that a reader's evaluation of a text is of significance for the durability of the work in the canon of 'high' literature only insofar as this evaluation is not merely passive. And although empirical reader research is aimed at encouraging readers to articulate their otherwise passive responses, such responses are very susceptible to manipulation, depending on the formulation of the questions. On the other hand, it must be admitted that feuilletons and academic papers are written by a highly specialized, particularly literate and articulate subclass which should not be identified wholesale with the 'average' reader or accorded canonical authority. Yet the professional reviewer's evaluation of a text can nevertheless be taken to be in many ways representative, since, as Hannelore Link observes, a successful critic must always take into account, at least to some extent, the views and prejudices of his readers.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, if written documents are adopted as the basis of reception analysis, one

must acknowledge that no guarantee can be given for the comprehensiveness of the available material - in Doderer's case some 950 articles of varying length and quality held by the Biederstein Verlag and kindly made available by the late Dr Konradin Zeller, an archive which is supplemented by the holdings of the Austrian 'Nationalbibliothek', where much of the material is duplicated and several hundred additional articles are to be found,<sup>55</sup> and also by Professor Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler's private collection which contains a number of otherwise inaccessible recent articles. On the other hand, judging by the disparaging tone of some of the reviews, there are absolutely no grounds for assuming any conscious manipulation or distortion by Doderer's publishers or trustees; on the contrary, there is every reason to believe that the available material is an accurate reflection of the actual reception accorded to Doderer's works.

It must also be admitted that we often learn more about the critic's own particular hobbyhorse than about the work which is under discussion. Thus F. H. Riedl says of Die Dämonen: 'Aber ein Raum fehlt restlos: der religiöse! Darin liegt die Begrenztheit dieses Romans.'<sup>56</sup> Perhaps predictably, the Jesuit priest H. Becher agrees: 'Wo der Bereich des wesentlich Bösen berührt wird, muß auch vom Guten und von Gott die Rede sein, dessen Widerpart der Dämon ist. Nun wird, wenn wir genau gelesen haben, das Wort "Gott" auf den 1345 Seiten nie genannt.'<sup>57</sup> Emil Franzel, who was later to make an impassioned plea to Doderer to renounce the style of Die Merowinger and return to his 'classic', 'Viennese' style, was curiously critical of one of the very works he later held up as a canon for Doderer's creative production, Die Strudlhofstiege:

In einer Zeit, die sich aus dem Bann der Säkularisation löst

und die Entscheidungen wieder auf dem Felde von Glauben und Unglauben, Liebe zu Gott und Haß gegen Gott sucht, einen Roman solchen Umfangs zu schreiben, ohne daß auch nur der Schatten eines religiösen Problems auftaucht, ohne daß auch nur einer dieser Menschen jemals Gott gegenübersteht, ohne daß einmal die Beziehung Deus et anima auch nur von ferne berührt wird, das ist schon ein Kunststück!<sup>58</sup>

Die Leute der Strudlhofstiege haben keinen Gott und keine Götter. Sie haben weder Religion noch trösten sie sich mit einer der Ersatzreligionen des Jahrhunderts. Sie sind keine Sportfanatiker, keine Nationalisten, keine Kommunisten. Sie sind auch keine Erotiker. Die Liebesabenteuer absolvieren sie ohne Freude und ohne Leid, mit animalistischer Selbstverständlichkeit. Sie sind nicht eifersüchtig, sie sind nicht gejagt von einer Leidenschaft ... Sie wissen so wenig vom Teufel, wie sie von Gott wissen.<sup>59</sup>

In der Strudlhofstiege gibt es weder den Schöpfer-Gott und Schöpfer-Geist, noch Jesus Christus, noch den Widersacher ... Doderers Menschen sind frei. Kein Gewissen beunruhigt sie, kein Gebot, kein Gedanke an das Jenseits.<sup>60</sup>

These reviewers' religious zeal is perhaps an admirable quality in itself, but such ethical criticisms are too frequently confused with, or employed in place of aesthetic judgements. Thus a rather prudish anonymous reviewer in Neues Buch says of Die Strudlhofstiege: 'Bei den zahlreichen sexuell-erotischen Bezügen und der inneren Bindungslosigkeit eignet sich der Roman nicht für eine katholische Volksbücherei.'<sup>61</sup>

Again Emil Franzel concurs: 'Es herrscht eine beinahe unbeschränkte sexuelle Promiskuität. Sie wird aber nicht einmal als Problem empfunden. Daß es hier um Fluch und Sünde gehen könnte, steht gar nicht zur Erwägung. Der Selbstmord der wüstesten unter den vorgestellten Frauenzimmern kommt beinahe unvermittelt, weil er kein menschliches Motiv im Religiösen oder Antireligiösen hat, sondern allenfalls ein

Nervenzusammenbruch ist.'<sup>62</sup> It comes as no surprise when Franzel frankly admits: 'Ich bin ein restaurativer, konservativer, reaktionärer, altmodischer Mensch.'<sup>63</sup>

Similarly, it does not require an inspired piece of detective work to ascertain the ideological foundations of Karl M. Benedek's critical comments on Die Dämonen:

Von den in der Zeit, in der der Roman spielt, florierenden, durch die Arbeiterbewegung geschaffenen und durchgesetzten Volksbildungsinstituten weiß Doderer nichts zu berichten ... Es wird auch nicht in Betracht gezogen, daß sogar die primitivsten Voraussetzungen für die entfernte Denkarbeit einer solchen Selbstbefreiung von Bildungsschranken, wie sie Doderer vorschwebt, nämlich der Achtstundentag, ein paar Urlaubstage und ein das nackte Existenzminimum etwas übersteigender Lohn, erst als Ergebnis gewerkschaftlicher und politischer Kämpfe, also durch die Tätigkeit von an allgemeinen Einrichtungen rüttelnden, der zweiten Wirklichkeit verfallenen Menschen, von Arbeitern und Arbeiterführern, die sich nicht von ihrer Klasse, sondern mit ihrer Klasse befreien wollten, zustande gekommen sind.<sup>64</sup>

On the other hand, the Jewish reviewer Meier Teich, obviously under some misapprehension as to the original date of publication of Die Dämonen, and equally evidently unaware of Doderer's controversial association with the Nazi Party in Austria, assures the potential Israeli reader in 1968:

Daß Hitler kein 'einmaliger Betriebsunfall der deutschen Geschichte' war, und was den Deutschenhass in der Welt rechtfertigt: das führt er [Doderer] bis auf Grillparzers Erklärung zurück, daß immer wieder 'aus eigenem Schoss der Barbar sich los ringt und alles Große, die Kunst, die Wissenschaft, den Staat ... hinabstürzt zur Oberfläche

eigener Gemeinheit'. Seine Voraus-Sicht aber der kommenden Ereignisse hatte Doderer in seinem vorher erschienenen großen Zeitroman Die Dämonen aufgezeigt, den er schon in den zwanziger Jahren verfasst hat. Was damals, bei der hoffnungslosen Wirklichkeitsblindheit der Menschen, die einem Übermaß von Entmenschung keinen Glauben schenkten, kaum aktuell und interessant erschien, ist, rückblickend, faszinierend und ganz besonders für 'Altösterreicher' vor dem ersten Weltkrieg und für diejenigen, die in den zwei Jahrzehnten zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen Wien und das schwankende Dasein dieses genussvollen, aber gar nicht so harmlosen Phäakenvölkchens miterlebt haben, ungeheuer spannend, noch immer aktuell und von dauerndem Interesse.

...

[Doderer war] unter allen Umständen ein großer Erzähler, der nicht nur das seltene Talent hatte, Menschen und Landschaft, das Seelenleben der Einzelnen und der Gruppen in einer kunstreichen Sprache lebendig zu gestalten, sondern auch Gesinnung und Charakter bewies und glänzend bewährte: in einer Zeitperiode, wo das Gegenteil sich besser bezahlt und den literarischen Abfall 'berühmt' machte. Sein Wort war und blieb frei und lebendig und hat sich niemals zur staatlichen Gebrauchskunst Goebbels'scher Prägung hinunterdrücken lassen.<sup>65</sup>

The ambivalent relationship between Doderer's work and the demands of the Nazis will be examined in detail in the following chapter.

It is in the reviews of Doderer's diaries that the critics' rigid ideological presuppositions are most crassly revealed. Humbert Fink outlines what most people would expect diaries written between 1940 and 1950 to contain: 'die Deskription eines wichtigen Jahrzehnts (und ergänzende Reflektionen, Impressionen und Spekulationen).'<sup>66</sup> Again Meier Teich duly finds what he is looking for: 'Immer wieder findet man die schärfsten Verurteilungen der "Menschenpeiniger in Zivil", der "Organe der Richter und Henker", der "Apokalyptiker" und "Bochewisten", die ihn [Doderer] nach der Besetzung Wiens noch vor dem Krieg zu einem

heimatlosen Menschen gemacht haben.'<sup>67</sup> Yet, in an ironic reversal of Doderer's dictum 'Aus dem Seienden lesen und nicht aus dem Sollenden interpretieren',<sup>68</sup> many of the reviewers rebuke the author for what they deem to be a lack of political commentary and social commitment, in which so many of his artistic inferiors excel. It is Doderer's putative indifference to what is going on around him that most irritates his reviewers:

Verhältnismäßig spärlich fließen leider die Äußerungen, in denen Doderer sich mit seiner Umwelt beschäftigt ...<sup>69</sup>

In der Tat sind es Selbstgespräche, die mitunter zu lesen sind, als lebte der Autor allein in der Welt. In einer Welt immerhin, die bis zum Jahre 1945 von einem Krieg heimgesucht war. Existierte dieses Tagebuch als einziges im Krieg entstandene Literaturwerk, spätere Geschichtsschreiber fänden darin Zeugnisse, die so gut wie nichts von den Erschütterungen der Zeit und den Leiden der Menschen verrieten ... Die Tagebuchaufzeichnungen Doderers lesen sich so als Dokumente eines sich isolierenden Lebens, einer Verinnerlichung, welche die äußere Welt nur wahrnehmen läßt, wenn sie der privaten Existenz allzu handgreiflich auf den Leib rückt. ... Fakten dringen nur an die Peripherie der Existenz. Ganz zuhause bleibt Doderer in der Welt seiner Romane, deren Figuren ihm näher sind, offensichtlich, als die lebenden Figuren seiner Umgebung.<sup>70</sup>

... seine [Doderers] hermetische Abgeschlossenheit gegen die Zeit widersteht jeder bündigen Erklärung. So klammert der Hauptmann der großdeutschen Luftwaffe Heimito von Doderer in seinen Aufzeichnungen von 1940-1950 die fünf Kriegsjahre ... fast völlig aus. Vom Krieg ist nicht die Rede, keine Notiz erwähnt Stalingrad, die Konzentrationslager oder den 20. Juli 1944.<sup>71</sup>

Daß auch Apperzipierer Heimito von Doderer, der seine Zeitgenossen der 'Apperzeptionsverweigerung' zeicht, manche Tatsachen nicht wahrnehmen will, zeigen seine Aufzeichnungen aus

den Kriegsjahren. Der Luftwaffenhauptmann von Doderer ... nahm ... vom Zweiten Weltkrieg nur insoweit Kenntnis, als er selber betroffen war, und selbst dann wirken seine Tagebuch-Eintragungen eher wie Notizen zur Kampagne in Frankreich von 1792.<sup>72</sup>

Doderers Bemerkungen zu einem Zeitgeschehen, das jeden anderen aufgewühlt hat, hören sich sonderbar indifferent an. ... Er schreibt auch einmal über den Nationalismus, über die Deutschen, über die Judenfrage. Aber das klingt, als sei es einer Kulturgeschichte über die Zeit der Inquisition entnommen. Grillparzer-Zitate über den 'proletarischen Menschen' ersetzen jede Art von Engagement ...<sup>73</sup>

Doderer, der nahezu auf allen Kriegsschauplätzen anwesend war, bewegte sich mit geschlossenen oder ganz nach innen gerichteten Augen, die vom äußeren Grauen nur einen fernen Widerschein wahrnahmen.<sup>74</sup>

Such prescriptive polemics on what a diary written during the greatest catastrophe the twentieth century has yet known ought to contain, are perhaps understandable, but they reveal a singular lack of awareness of the function of 'real' diaries. Doderer himself provides an accurate definition:

... das wirkliche - nämlich auf seinen Verfasser wirkende - Tagebuch besteht aus einer aufbewahrten Reihe von Momentaufnahmen der Stellungen, mit welchen unsere Intelligenz jeweils auf das anschwellende und andrängende Leben reagierte, ob nun dieses Leben in Lesen, Krieg führen, Arbeiten oder Verliebt-Sein bestand: hier wird es für den Augenblick definiert, für den augenblicklichen Bedarf des Existenzkampfes einer Persönlichkeit bezwungen, erleichtert ...

Das Tagebuch ist keine erzählende oder beschreibende Form. Es ist ... eine epigrammatische und keine descriptive oder genaue Prosa ... . Aber kein Schreiber wird die Kategorie, darin er sich bewegt, so schwer agnoszieren wie der Tagebuch-

Schreiber, keiner lieber und leichter aus ihr herausfallen, sich aus ihr verführen lassen (und zwar in einen ausgemachten Galimathias) als er.<sup>75</sup>

Doderer's diaries reflect in their refreshingly brutal frankness the author's lifelong struggle with himself, which is best summed up in the second of his nineteen 'curricula vitae': 'Was ich an mir selbst gelitten, läßt dasjenige, was andere mir an Erniedrigungen und Leiden zugefügt haben, in völlige Belanglosigkeit als Begleiterscheinung verschwinden.'<sup>76</sup> Even in the most adverse of external circumstances, the author's primary concern is his work:

Meine derzeitige Lage wird verschärft durch täglich auftretende Trigeminus-Neuralgien (so schlimm also wie seit Jahren nicht mehr), durch einen Ohrenkatarrh (der vielleicht die Neuralgien anregt - hoffentlich ist's keine Otitis!) und obendrein: durch den völligen Mangel an Zigaretten. Jedoch: in dieser Woche ist bis jetzt kein Tag ohne ein kleines Vorwärtskommen in der erzählenden Prosa gewesen.<sup>77</sup>

Heute schwach beisammen. Durch Mittel schmerzfrei. Immerhin eine page de prose.<sup>78</sup>

Melzer entwickelt sich überraschend; diese Biographie gewinnt einen Hintergrund, den ich als einen so tiefen dort garnicht vermutet hätte. Könnt' ich jetzt in Ruhe arbeiten, sei's gleich unter Verhältnissen wie diesen hier, wenn sie stabil oder einigermaßen stabil bleiben würden!<sup>79</sup>

Erstaunlicherweise gewinne ich mitten unter allem - an Melzers Lebensgeschichte wiederum Anschluß.<sup>80</sup>

Heute drei Seiten Prosa, Melzers Abreise.<sup>81</sup>

... Um zwölf Uhr die in Mariki-Matinsk übliche Offiziers-Besprechung.

Seit gestern wieder Text, Strudlhofstiege.<sup>82</sup>



Yet if the reviewers' reactions to Doderer's 'war diaries' were both predictable and understandable, there is clearly no justification for a similar response to his Commentarii 1951 bis 1956; but here, too, the familiar reproaches can be found:

Zeitgeschichtliche Themen existieren für diesen einstigen  
Geschichtsstudent nicht ...<sup>83</sup>

Auf politische, psycho-soziale und kulturelle Phänomene scheint er nicht anzusprechen. Er ist 1933 in die (illegale österreichische) Naziartei ein- und 1938 wieder ausgetreten; seither gibt es für ihn nicht nur keine Parteien mehr, sondern überhaupt keine Wirklichkeit, die ihn bestimmen könnte, die er verarbeiten und auf die er reagieren müßte. Es gibt weder Freud-Marx-Darwin noch Hitler-Stalin-Franco noch die Folgen der sechs. Es gibt keine 'Haltung zur Welt'. Obwohl er sagt, 'Die Tiefe ist außen', gibt es nur ein Innen: seines. Er ist absorbiert von sich selbst.<sup>84</sup>

Mehr als seine Arbeit und seine private Vergangenheit jedoch nimmt der Autor nicht zur Kenntnis. Von der Gegenwart der fünfziger Jahre wird so gut wie nichts berichtet. Seiner Apperzeptionsforderung zum Trotz weigert Doderer sich, in seinen Tagebüchern das Geschehen der Außenwelt wahrzunehmen. Er lebt nur seiner Sprache, formt das, was ihm wichtig ist, zu kostbaren, pedantisch preziösen Wortornamenten.<sup>85</sup>

Yet would it be churlish to suggest that Doderer had every right to write whatever he wanted in his diary? In April 1955 Doderer noted: 'Ein wirkliches Tagebuch wird zuletzt nur dem Verfasser verständlich sein ...., wie das bei meinen Aufzeichnungen von 1935 und 1936 der Fall war.'<sup>86</sup> To prescribe what an author ought to find interesting enough to record in his diary, to suggest that personal reality ought to be recognizably consonant with 'historical reality' or historiography, and to question the integrity of an author simply because he is upright

enough to keep a diary for himself and not with the specific aim of pleasing or appeasing a potential readership, is symptomatic of what Jeffrey Sammons has dubbed the 'sociological argument ex silentio'.<sup>87</sup> The idea of false consciousness has heightened our awareness of what an author does not say, but surely this is of no relevance as far as his personal diaries are concerned? It is only when, in Die Dämonen, Doderer explicitly attempts to interpret one of the most controversial and far-reaching events in recent Austrian history that one is entitled to ask what is obscured and veiled by the text and whether or not Doderer's interpretation is a balanced account of the events. Yet having done so, one must at some point, as Sammons rightly suggests, accept the 'ideologically limiting boundaries of a text',<sup>88</sup> and then turn one's attention to what goes on within these boundaries. It is precisely the refusal to do so that weakens the following criticisms by Hans Joachim Schröder:

Probleme der Lohnabhängigkeit etwa, der Beschaffung und Sicherung des Arbeitsplatzes, der Verbesserung der Arbeitsbedingungen oder der Verkürzung der Arbeitszeit, alle diese Probleme, die das Leben des Arbeiters direkt und mit härtester Konsequenz bestimmen, werden von Doderer kaum berührt, geschweige denn thematisiert.<sup>89</sup>

In der Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts ... monumentale Romane zu veröffentlichen, die zum Beispiel von der Geschichtskatastrophe der Weltkriege so gut wie gar keine Notiz nehmen, bedeutet doch, an den zentralen Realitätsfragen dieses Jahrhunderts vorbeizuschreiben.<sup>90</sup>

Schröder would have done well to have heeded Frye's warning that the critic's function 'is not to tell the poet what he should do, but to study what he does do'.<sup>91</sup> Yet throughout the reviews of Doderer's

fiction one encounters the same sort of prescriptive criticism, revealing, as it does, more about the critic's predetermined expectations than about the text itself. Franzel even goes so far as to suggest whom Doderer ought to have mentioned in his novels: 'Anton Kuh ... (und zwar als den Erfinder einer läppischen Phrase) erwähnt Doderer, nicht etwa Karl Kraus, Weinheber, Austerlitz oder Peter Altenberg, nicht Hofmannsthal oder Schaukal, Polgar oder Max Mell, keinen einzigen der Wiener Meister des Wortes, die in dieser Zeit gelebt haben'.<sup>92</sup> As Herbert Eisenreich says: 'So steht's nicht geschrieben und ein Buch hat allemal so gelesen zu werden, wie es geschrieben ist'.<sup>93</sup> Claus Pack, basing his interpretation on what he expects after reading Romain's Les Hommes de bonne volonté, provides the prospective reader of Die Wasserfälle von Slunj with a whole catalogue of topics he feels Doderer should have dealt with in the novel:

Geht es Romain's neben den Schicksalen seiner Gestalten auch um die Entwicklung von Ideen, von gesellschaftlichen Gruppen, in die politische, soziale und militärische Ereignisse nicht nur hineinspielen, sondern formend, bestimmend hineinwirken, so finden wir bei Doderer nichts, aber schon gar nichts vom Hintergrund einer so bewegten Zeit, wie es die Jahre von 1877 bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg in der Donaumonarchie waren, in der Die Wasserfälle von Slunj spielen. Hier ist nichts von jenem Gewitterleuchten zu sehen, das schon früh den Zerfall ankündigte, nichts von der Ära, in der Schnitzler, Freud, Hofmannsthal, Schönerer, Lanz-Liebenfels, Lueger, die 'Sezession' gestaltend, sprengend, als Keim des Neuen und als Keim der Katastrophen wirksam waren. Hier ist nichts von den sich anbahnenden sozialen Umschichtungen zu spüren, nichts von den zentrifugalen nationalistischen Kräften, die die Monarchie zerstörten, nichts vom geistigen Drama des bürgerlichen Untergangs.<sup>94</sup>

The most pernicious aspect of such prescriptive criticism, which is based,

no doubt, on monistic preconceptions of what Doderer ought to be writing, will be illuminated in our examination of Die Merowinger, where the reviewers' stubborn refusal to accept what the novelist has written, to describe rather than prescribe, evidently blocks their perception of the textual potentialities.

It has been necessary, in the cause of a healthy scepticism, to relativize the validity of what the critics have to say, and to put the influence of their pronouncements into proper perspective, but this should not be allowed to obscure the vital role the critics should be accorded in reception analysis. In the first instance, their reviews offer ready-made documentary evidence of actual reader reactions, (presumably) artistically sensitized readers to be sure, but readers nonetheless. Moreover, the critical responses reflected in the reviews are susceptible to empirical research and thus infinitely preferable to Jauss's vague, ideal reader or any attempts at closet sociology involving a detailed examination of the reader's age, sex, occupation and what he had for breakfast the day he read the book. Yet any empirical approach to reception analysis that seeks to reconstruct a readership or its expectations must inevitably concern itself with such matters, and will spend more time attempting to ascertain whether a book borrowed from a library was passed round the whole family or simply used to prop up a table, than on looking at the aesthetic quality of the book itself. The inefficacy of this approach should by now be self-evident.

It is a commonly held belief that German literary criticism is characterized by a rigidly stratified caste system, with the differences between feuilletons and academic papers being particularly crass.<sup>95</sup> The former, we are assured, are 'journalistic', aim at informing the reader of the novelty and peculiarity of new publications and their authors, and are more topical and subjective, whereas the 'Literaturwissenschaft' of the

academy is more factual and 'scientific', and concerned to provide more 'objective' information through analysis in broader connections.<sup>96</sup> At first blush this might appear to be an accurate definition, and it would certainly account for the tendency in German literary research up to the 1960s simply to dismiss the primary stage of the reception of a work as irrelevant or 'vorwissenschaftlich'.<sup>97</sup> Yet even in the German context such arbitrary and artificial differentiations do not stand up to detailed scrutiny. Quite apart from the fact that academics not infrequently try their hand at feuilletons, many reviews, particularly in the larger national dailies and weeklies, can easily stand comparison with academic papers (and occasionally find themselves reproduced in academic publications). Moreover, far from contemplating the work in broader connections, as has been claimed, academic research is more and more characterized by specialization and in-depth analysis of one particular aspect of a work. Much more importantly, it is surely totally illogical to claim that academic work is more objective than the feuilleton, since the researcher is subject to sociological and historical determinants in the same way as the reviewer, and neither can possibly exclude personal taste from his judgments. The strict segregation of the two main forms of literary criticism is of relevance only insofar as it encourages us to bear in mind the diverse circumstances in which the articles are produced. But while the hurried book reviewer cannot be expected to devote the time and intellectual energy to an individual work that is the prerequisite of academic research, his critical opinion is equally as important for the reception of a work as is that of a respected university professor. Indeed, one does well to recall the fact that while the scholarly essay is of primarily academic interest, the feuilletonist has at his disposal a medium with far greater potential for influencing and manipulating a prospective reader.

Not all reviewers are equal, of course. A truly 'scientific' approach

would consider not only the reputation and authority of the critic, his political ideology and the influence and political leanings of the medium at his disposal (national or regional newspaper, radio or even television), but even the position and length of the article in a newspaper or the broadcasting time of a radio review. Some empiricists have even gone so far as to suggest that the researcher should concern himself less with the quality of the review than with documenting the numerical quantity and geographical spread of the reviews to illustrate the 'true' influence of a work.<sup>98</sup> It would be unwise, of course, to be totally insouciant about the reputation of the critic and the newspaper he writes for, but it would be equally injudicious to submit to the tutelage of such sociologism as the empiricists demand, for here, too, this merely diverts our attention away from the text. Moreover, the most important point is surely not the mere fact that a work has been reviewed, but what the reviewer has to say, what impells him to do so and whether his reaction is justified by the properties of the text.

### III Doderer Research: a brief Survey

Any survey of the scholarly research devoted to a major writer such as Heimito von Doderer will be something in the nature of a Cook's tour, with the emphasis strongly determined by the researcher's field of interest. It is the narrowness of Ulla Lidén's field of interest that limits the value of her picture of Doderer research in 1970;<sup>99</sup> for the authoress evaluates the secondary literature almost exclusively on the basis of whether or not it has anything to say about Doderer's conception of language. In addition, Lidén's brief look at the newspaper reviews of Doderer's

Tangenten is further relativized by the fact that she had access to nothing more than a 'representative selection' of the reviews, a selection made by Horst Wiemer of the Biederstein Verlag.<sup>100</sup> Thomas Heinrich Falk's survey of Doderer criticism in the same year is of equally limited relevance, as the author again had no direct access to much of the material. Quite apart from the fact that Falk was aware of only two doctoral theses - by Haberl and Weber - that had been presented by 1970, he claims that, 'through their news service, the Biederstein Verlag ... has [sic] collected most of the articles, which are almost unanimous in their praise of Doderer. They now constitute 18 large fascicles, containing approximately 5,000 items.'<sup>101</sup> Falk has since suggested that he may have been given unreliable information 'because I was working right at the time when Doderer died and a great effort was made to continue to sell Doderer's novels.'<sup>102</sup> Once again the potentially pernicious influence of interested parties - here the publishers - on the 'purity' of academic research is underlined.

A first attempt at a more comprehensive picture of the 'Stand der Dodererforschung' was undertaken in 1975 by Jan Papiór, whose valuable survey provided hitherto unknown details of research on Doderer in Poland and an invaluable, though now outdated list of theses in progress.<sup>103</sup> Papiór's useful article is supplemented by Hans Joachim Schröder's much more critical look at Doderer research in 1976, in which Schröder arrives at the following conclusion: 'Insgesamt tritt die Doderer-Forschung, von der Arbeit Reiningers und einzelnen kleineren Studien abgesehen, auf der Stelle. Sie begnügt sich mit einer unreflektierten Anwendung werkimmanenter Interpretationsmethoden. Die historischen, ideologischen und erkenntnistheoretischen Grundlagen eines ohne Zweifel höchst problematischen Werks werden nicht analysiert, geschweige denn in Frage gestellt.'<sup>104</sup> More importantly, having established that Doderer research is as conservative as the author

it deals with, Schröder goes on: 'In dem Maße, wie die Forschung bemüht ist, sich im eigenen Traditionalismus zu stabilisieren und zu isolieren, verliert auch das Werk Doderers an Bedeutung.'<sup>105</sup> For what is consistently not criticized is gradually forgotten, he concludes.<sup>106</sup> The purpose of the following brief survey is to outline the course of Doderer research up to the 'new beginning' represented by Reininger and Schröder, from the point of view of whether or not the latter was justified in his virtually wholesale dismissal of the findings of Doderer research up to the mid 1970s, and then to ascertain what consequences the critical impetus given by the two has had on academic work on Doderer since, a question which will ultimately lead to the complex problem of Doderer's literary ranking today.

Dietrich Weber's Heimito von Doderer: Studien zu seinem Romanwerk<sup>107</sup> was not only the first full-length work on Doderer which found a willing publisher, but a seminal propaedeutic study which is indispensable for an understanding of Doderer's work up to Die Posaunen von Jericho. In his attempt to discern some sort of pattern in Doderer's literary output, Weber introduces the terms 'monographic' and 'polygraphic' to distinguish between the earlier novels, which concentrate on one principal protagonist, and the more involved structural fabric of the mature novels, in which a whole series of major characters fills the stage. This differentiation is obviously justifiable from a structural point of view, but it has, as we shall see, provided the critics with a convenient endorsement of their dismissal of anything outwith the 'cycle'<sup>108</sup> of so-called 'Viennese' novels as a 'by-product'.

Lutz Werner Wolff's Wiedereroberte Außenwelt: Studien zur Erzählweise Heimito von Doderers am Beispiel des 'Romans No.7'<sup>109</sup> can be regarded in many ways as a complement to Weber's monograph. Taking up Weber's division of Doderer's work into two phases, Wolff now detects a third and aesthetic-



ally most satisfying phase dating from 1958 onwards. It is, however, characteristic that Die Merowinger, which evidently cuts across the grain of any attempt at classification, can find no place in Wolff's scheme of things. Nevertheless, to do full justice to Wolff's research, one must acknowledge that his textual analysis is a sound basis for an understanding of Doderer's 'Spätwerk'.

Of the other works published on Doderer before 1976, René Tschirky's Heimito von Doderers 'Posaunen von Jericho'. Versuch einer Interpretation<sup>110</sup> and Roswitha Fischer's Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der 'Strudlhofstiege' Heimito von Doderers<sup>111</sup> are both fundamentally limited in their approach. But whereas Tschirky's findings are based on an uncritical acceptance of the author's own ideas, Fischer convincingly illustrates that, at least in the case of Die Strudlhofstiege, Doderer's claims of the 'apriority' of form over content were illusory. Fischer explodes a myth put into circulation by Doderer and willingly accepted by gullible critics: "Für den Romancier ist die Form die Entelechie jedes Inhalts".<sup>112</sup> At last the idea of Doderer as a 'Roman-Ingenieur',<sup>113</sup> who constructs his novels on a drawing-board according to some pre-given formal pattern or structure, is called into question. More significantly, Fischer also sees her findings as a warning against blind acceptance of the canonical validity of Doderer's theoretical pronouncements on the novel. Despite the basic limitation of her study to the genesis of one novel, Fischer arrives at some valuable critical conclusions which are of relevance to all of Doderer's works.

The slim volume of Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer,<sup>114</sup> edited by Xaver Schaffgotsch, provides a wide variety of personal (and sometimes overpersonal) reminiscences by Doderer's friends and acquaintances. Although some interesting insights are gained into the author's private life and habits, predictably little critical or analytical comment is to be found.

One major stumbling-block to a relatively comprehensive survey of Doderer research is the availability of unpublished theses. For reasons of easy availability and/or relevance to the topic of our research, only eleven of the two dozen or so dissertations on Doderer which have so far failed to find a publisher can be taken into consideration here.<sup>115</sup>

The first doctoral thesis on Doderer outside Germany was Martin Swales's 'Heimito von Doderer and the Return to Realism',<sup>116</sup> a synopsis of the main points of which can, happily, be found in his 'The Narrator in the Novels of Heimito von Doderer',<sup>117</sup> and 'Ordnung und Verworrenheit. Zum Werk Heimito von Doderers'.<sup>118</sup> In a far more critical approach to Doderer's novels than that adopted by Weber, Swales takes umbrage at the author's 'mechanical and irritating' overuse of romantic irony, and particularly of authorial intrusion.<sup>119</sup> If Swales's criticism seems at times a little harsh, it is nevertheless symptomatic of the sort of spontaneous emotional response that Doderer's work repeatedly provokes.

As early as 1960, Hans Flesch-Brunningen demonstrated in his radio scenario 'Doderer ist Wien',<sup>120</sup> in which a 'homo positivus' and a 'homo negativus' debate Doderer's virtues and vices, just how wide the gulf between the author's admirers and his opponents is, and the polarization of opinion has since been noted so often as to be a commonplace in Doderer criticism.<sup>121</sup> One of the aims of his study is to illustrate how the polarization of opinion is visible in the diverse responses to every aspect of Doderer's writing, and to ask whether this tendency to provoke diametrically opposed reactions does not in itself imply a limitation of his artistic achievement.

Schröder criticizes Franz-Peter Haberl's dissertation on 'Theme and Structure in the Novels of Heimito von Doderer',<sup>122</sup> as being nothing more than a series of plot synopses in chronological order, and to this one might add that Doderer's theoretical pronouncements are neither analysed

nor evaluated, merely re-iterated. M.R. Mitchell's 'Heimito von Doderer as a Social Novelist',<sup>123</sup> and Thomas Heinrich Falk's 'Heimito von Doderer's Concept of the Novel: Theory and Practice',<sup>124</sup> rely equally heavily on plot synopsis. Falk's approach is summed up by the following statement on Doderer's conception of a 'wholesome destiny': 'It is not the purpose of this analysis to discuss the validity of the concept, but only to indicate the manner in which it is presented'.<sup>125</sup> In the context of such a naive belief in non-evaluative criticism, Schröder's study clearly stands out as a 'pioneering work'.<sup>126</sup>

Ulla Lidén's examination of Doderer's conception of language links the novelist's thoughts on language to modern linguistic theory, but perhaps she might have made more of her findings.<sup>127</sup> Despite her recognition of the apparent 'exclusivity' of Doderer's language<sup>128</sup> and her warning that his penchant for 'Fremdwörter' might present difficulties for younger readers without a classical education,<sup>129</sup> Lidén is singularly reluctant to criticize Doderer on this account, since modern linguistic theory acknowledges the necessity of such terminology.<sup>130</sup> Perhaps instead of merely providing dictionary definitions of some of Doderer's 'Austriazismen' Lidén might have reflected on the extent to which the use of such expressions in conjunction with the foreign words, not to mention a highly idiosyncratic attitude towards orthography represents a barrier to our understanding of his works and contributes to his reputation as a 'scurrilous' linguistic eccentric. In Chapter Two of the following study, a brief examination of the difficulties Doderer's linguistic style presents for translators, and an evaluation of how successfully his English, or rather American translators, have circumvented these difficulties, will reveal that Doderer's use of language is central to the charge of parochialism occasionally levelled at his work, and the main reason why so many readers find Doderer 'inaccessible'.

If Anne Close Ulmer's 539-page 'A Doderer Repertoire with an Essay on Characterization in his Novels'<sup>131</sup> rarely merits a mention in surveys of Doderer criticism, it is little wonder, for it comprises primarily an alphabetical list with a brief description of 755 characters who appear in Doderer's novels. Even at that, Ulmer manages to come to the conclusion that Etelka Stangler is 'the son of a dominating father and a meek and submissive mother'.<sup>132</sup> Meisgeier, she assures us, is a 'portrait of Hitler', since, like the latter, he is 'Austrian, small in stature, and associated with fights in German beer-halls' and he also dies with his 'mistress' in what amounts to nothing less than a suicide.<sup>133</sup> In the light of such a palpably inadequate approach, one cannot help but see the justification in Schröder's claim that 'eine Kritik der Doderer-Forschung' is almost as important as a critical analysis of Doderer himself.<sup>134</sup>

A number of dissertations were presented around the same time as Reininger's and Schröder's 'new beginning' in Doderer criticism. Andrew Barker's 'The Individual and Reality in the Works of Heimito von Doderer',<sup>135</sup> is a useful attempt to extrapolate some sense from the highly esoteric terminology of Doderer's theoretical writings. Barker rightly emphasizes the dangers inherent in the high level of abstraction of Doderer's thought, which tends to obscure the realities with which Doderer was concerned. However, Barker does not succeed in extricating himself from the web of Doderer's terminology, and his self-imposed limitation to Doderer's own view of the problems discussed precludes the possibility of any fundamental criticism of Doderer's theoretical premises.

Wolfgang Düsing's 'Habilitationsschrift' 'Erinnerungstechnik und Identitätsproblematik. Untersuchungen zu einer Erzählform bei Musil, Döblin und Doderer',<sup>136</sup> a revised version of which was recently published under the title Erinnerung und Identität. Untersuchungen zu einem Erzähl-

problem bei Musil, Döblin und Doderer,<sup>137</sup> discusses Doderer's use of 'reminiscence technique' (R. Pascal) with particular reference to Die Strudlhofstiege. Like so many of Doderer's critics, Düsing reveals in his study the advantages and limitations of descriptive, 'value-free' interpretation. Düsing does not proceed beyond examples of Doderer's conception of the function of memory, and for this reason is content to illustrate evidence in Die Strudlhofstiege of Doderer's belief in 'periodicity' rather than evaluate it. Similarly, Düsing makes no attempt at a comparative evaluation of how successfully the three authors he deals with treat the problem of memory.

Margaret A. Marks examines Doderer's relationship to Vienna as illustrated in Die Dämonen, in her thesis on 'The City in the Twentieth Century German Novel: its Treatment in Works by Rilke, Döblin, Koeppen and Doderer'.<sup>138</sup> Marks rightly points out that the common belief that Doderer presents a comprehensive picture of the stratified structure of Viennese society is patently misguided, for Doderer's Vienna is a 'world of writers and gentlemen, maybe Doderer's world, but certainly not the whole of Vienna'.<sup>139</sup> Marks also establishes that, because of the multifarious connections between the characters in Die Dämonen, Vienna 'seems to be like a village or small town, where everyone knows everyone else, or has heard of them'.<sup>140</sup> Yet here too, as was the case with Lidén, one feels that the authoress might well have made more of her findings. The question of whether the 'idyllic',<sup>141</sup> village-like quality of Doderer's Vienna, in which 'one has the feeling that the author prides himself on his topography of Viennese cafés',<sup>142</sup> might in any way have been responsible for the success of his 'Viennese novels', is never raised. Moreover, although Marks recognizes that when Doderer 'leaves his basis in reality ... his account becomes least convincing',<sup>143</sup> she does not ask whether Doderer's apparent fixation with the minutiae of daily life in his native

city and his pedantic insistence on topographical detail might not amount to some sort of dependence on Vienna and at the same time be a potential obstacle to a full appreciation of his works, at least for the non-Viennese reader. These questions are vital for an understanding of Doderer reception and will be taken up in Chapter Two of this study.

One final dissertation which was presented roughly at the same time as Schröder's work must be mentioned here: Dieter Liewerscheidt's 'Satirischer Anspruch und Selbstpersiflage in Heimato von Doderer's Roman Die Merowinger',<sup>144</sup> the only full-length study devoted to this novel hitherto (if one excepts Bernd Herta's 44-page 'Diplomarbeit' on 'Wut und Wissenschaft in Doderer's Roman Die Merowinger',<sup>145</sup>), and, curiously enough, the only German doctoral thesis on Doderer so far which has not found a publisher. Liewerscheidt's findings will also be discussed in Chapter Two of this study.

Turning to the secondary literature on Doderer in books, anthologies and academic periodicals up to 1976, one is immediately struck by the singular lack of articles on Doderer's work as a whole, which endorses the view expressed above on the increasing specialization of academic research. Equally striking is the almost unanimous agreement on Doderer's literary standing. He is hailed as one of the writers who 'try to lead the modern novel out of its present crisis'.<sup>146</sup> Peter Demetz describes Doderer as the legitimate heir to Thomas Mann,<sup>147</sup> and Ernst Erich Noth maintains in 1961 that Doderer is 'clearly the dominant figure in German-language novel writing, ... and definitely a candidate for the Nobel Prize'.<sup>148</sup> Equally undisputed is the fact that Doderer is essentially a 'monumentalist',<sup>149</sup> whose Die Dämonen is 'the one book which has secured his place in world literature'.<sup>150</sup>

Schröder has suggested that the academic criticism of Doderer gives the impression that he is the greatest novelist of the era,<sup>151</sup> and this is

true to a certain extent, but it is essentially as a uniquely Austrian phenomenon that Doderer is most frequently celebrated. Hilde Spiel, for instance, insists that Die Strudlhofstiege and Die Dämonen represent 'ein non plus ultra österreichischer Lebens- und Geisteshaltung'.<sup>152</sup> Hans Weigel proclaims: 'Er [Doderer] hat unsere Literatur aus der verwirrten Ratlosigkeit der unseligen Zwischenkriegszeit in die neue Zeit geholt.'<sup>153</sup> Viktor Suchy concurs: 'Heimito von Doderer ... ist ... sehr eindeutig den Weg vom Musilschen "Kakanien" in das neue Österreich gegangen ...',<sup>154</sup>

Again and again we are assured that Doderer's work presents a picture of the whole of Viennese society:

Es [Doderers Werk] porträtiert Vertreter aller Gesellschaftsschichten und erweist sie am Ende doch jeweils als Träger eines einmaligen individuellen Schicksals.<sup>155</sup>

... im Stofflichen gilt Doderer als der präziseste Schilderer Wiens im ersten Jahrhundertsdrittel, wobei die Skala vom Aristokratenpalais bis zum Studentenhotel, von der Bankdirektion bis ins Vorstadtcafé, vom Tennisplatz bis ins Kanalsystem reicht (und zwar alles aus eigener Anschauung); er ist nicht der Dichter einer Klasse, eines Standes, eines Klüngels, sondern einer ganzen Gesellschaft.<sup>156</sup>

Keine Schicht der Wiener Bevölkerung bleibt unerforscht, und in keinem der grundverschiedenen Milieus geht Doderer auch nur um Haaresbreite fehl ... Eben die erratische Art seines Wanderns durch alle diese Gefilde macht es ihm möglich, ein nahezu vollständiges Sittengemälde einer Stadt zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt zu geben.<sup>157</sup>

People from all levels of Austrian society appear, including various foreigners, who were almost as easily drawn to Vienna as to Paris.<sup>158</sup>

[Doderer's] books will survive, if for no other reason, because they register the inventory of a civilization in its totality.<sup>159</sup>

And in the heated discussion on the existence of an independent, specifically Austrian literature, a debate which was at its climax when Doderer died in 1966, the author's works were repeatedly cited as a perfect example of truly Austrian literature.<sup>160</sup> In his 'new look' at Austrian literature, Wolfgang B. Fleischmann sees in Doderer's work a 'fusion of a major portion of the first mainstream of Austrian literature (Arthur Schnitzler, Franz Werfel, Stefan Zweig, Joseph Roth, Alexander von Lernet-Holenia) with the second of Musil and of Broch'.<sup>161</sup> Ivar Ivask, who discerns an unbroken and 'almost timeless',<sup>162</sup> Austrian tradition from Grillparzer onwards, goes so far as to suggest that the monumental epics of Gütersloh and Doderer represent 'die bisher erstaunlichste und vielschichtigste Zusammenfassung österreichischen Wesens überhaupt'.<sup>163</sup>

Justified as the case for the recognition of a uniquely Austrian literature may be, the argument put forward on its behalf usually amounts to nothing more than the establishment of a more or less arbitrary set of 'traditional characteristics' (more often than not unverifiable generalizations), which are then applied to individual Austrian writers to determine the extent of their 'Austrianness'.<sup>164</sup> Thus such writers as Celan, Bachmann, Aichinger, Urzidil and Dor are 'banished' as unashamedly 'un-Austrian'.<sup>165</sup> Yet no matter what 'typically Austrian' characteristics one cares to select - the aversion to all that is big, great or loud, the deep mistrust of activity, the belief in 'verbal' reality, the keen sensitivity towards transience, the distance to reality, the conservatism or at least humanistic traditionalism, the self-effacement, the belief in Vienna as a natural cultural centre, the belief in the supra-national spirit of Austrian nationalism, the faith in the cultural symbiosis with Spain, the Slavonic world and Russia, the obsession with the Habsburg monarchy - or even if one chooses Hofmannsthal's schematic stereotype: 'Traditionelle Gesinnung, stabil fast durch Jahrhunderte.



Besitzt historischen Instinkt ... Selbstironie ... Verschämt, eitel, witzig ... Hineindenken in andere bis zur Charakterlosigkeit ... Jeder Einzelne Träger einer ganzen Menschlichkeit. Genußsucht. Vorwiegen des Privaten. Ironie bis zur Auflösung,<sup>166</sup> - Doderer invariably exemplifies the standardized image of the Austrian. Heinz Politzer describes Doderer as the 'crafty bard of the saga of Kakanian',<sup>167</sup> but insists that 'non-Kakanians are just as welcome ... as are Kakanians.'<sup>168</sup> Yet this is precisely the problem: the critics' intractable insistence on an identification of Doderer with the Austrian tradition, often born of a well-meant but exaggerated cultural separatism, has gradually but perhaps irrevocably pushed the author to the periphery of German literature, where he has come to be seen more and more as a 'typically Austrian' curiosity.

The dangers of the institutionalization of Doderer's works as a monument to the Austrian tradition did not, however, go entirely unnoticed. As early as 1956, in an important paper to which we shall return in Chapter Two, Karl August Horst pointed out the existence of a 'Begriffsfetischismus' in literary scholarship, a tendency towards arid classification which subsumes authors under a convenient label once and for all.<sup>169</sup> And in an even more crucial, but often underrated commentary, Herbert Eisenreich declared:

Einen schlimmen Dienst hat man unserem Autor erwiesen, als man begann, ihn zum literarischen Ur-Wiener zu stempeln. Was für ein Mißverständnis! Es sei denn, man begreife unter dem Wesen des Wienerischen die Einschmelzung vieler Welten in eine neue, ganz und gar eigenartige, politisch und geographisch kaum lokalisierbare Form (aber wer begreift's schon so immateriell?).

...

Rein österreichisch ist Doderer ... bloß im Stoff, darin so beschränkt, wie jeder andere große Romancier.<sup>170</sup>

Finally, Frank Trommler, whose Roman und Wirklichkeit. Eine Ortsbestimmung am Beispiel von Musil, Roth, Doderer und Gütersloh<sup>171</sup> was one of the important critical impulses in Doderer research, rightly noted in his seminal 'Für eine gerechte Doderer-Fama':

Doderer wird zu einem Synonym für Österreich gemacht, man fühlt sich bei ihm wieder in der farbenvollen Tradition, seine Bücher verewigen jene übernationale Substanz des Donauraums, die mit dem Fall der Monarchie nur scheinbar verlorenging. In Rezensionen und Feuilletons über Österreich nimmt man die Strudlhofstiege, die Dämonen, die Wasserfälle von Slunj zur Richtschnur, um Wirklichkeit und Totalität des Österreichischen aufzuweisen. Man stellt Doderer in die Reihe der Hofmannsthal, Kafka, Schnitzler, Kraus, Roth, Musil und Broch, in denen sich der Genius dieser Landschaft literarisch versammelte, als Erbe und Vertreter einer Epoche, die spätestens mit Maria Theresia begann und mit dem Glanz des übernationalen Reiches noch das erste Drittel des 20. Jahrhunderts beleuchtete. Man hält sich an ihn als den Garanten einer unverminderten Lebendigkeit österreichischer Form und Daseinsweise, weil er seine Bücher fast nur in Österreich spielen ließ, nimmt ihre Aussage für eine Chronik jener Lebensart und Geistigkeit, wie sie scheinbar schon Hofmannsthal in seinen Schriften gegeben hatte, bis hin zum Schwierigen. Man geht zurück bis Grillparzer und Nestroy, um diese Tradition zu fixieren, und nimmt von ihm das alte Österreich in gleicher Weise wie von Musil, Roth und Herzmanovsky entgegen.<sup>172</sup>

Although Trommler emphasizes that this image of Doderer is not only superficial and one-sided, but positively distorted, his timely warning and those of the other critics cited above were, on the whole, ignored. As we shall see, Doderer's reputation as a 'Wiener Ur-Viech'<sup>173</sup> is together with his idiosyncratic use of language and his less than unequivocal relationship to Vienna, vital for a proper understanding of his reception. The question which will inevitably be raised is to what extent Doderer

is hoist with his own petard, in other words to what degree he is responsible, directly or indirectly, for the establishment of this inaccurate or distorted image.

The profile of our simplified study of Doderer research would be equally distorted without a mention of the striking paucity of actual criticism of Doderer in the academic papers which appeared before 1976. Schröder's claim that this in itself tells us nothing about the quality of Doderer's work, since it is symptomatic of the weakness of literary scholarship that it has to justify its existence by first establishing the ranking of the work and author under consideration,<sup>174</sup> is only partly true. It was much rather the inveterate insistence on the part of the critics on interpreting Doderer in terms of his own theory that precluded any critical analysis of that theory. One characteristic example should suffice to illustrate this; Ivar Ivask proclaims: 'Doch erst in den Romanen Doderers scheint uns der lange vorhandene Vorsprung der Symphonie voll eingeholt zu sein.'<sup>175</sup> Anyone even slightly familiar with Doderer's theoretical pronouncements will recognize the source of Ivask's terminology. Allied to this uncritical acceptance of Doderer's theory is an almost 'pathological' preoccupation with the subject matter of his novels, which is not, as Schmid would have us believe, the preserve of German critics.<sup>176</sup> Thus Jethro Bithell is concerned to express how surprised he is that Melzer 'marries a girl who to his knowledge has been the mistress' of Eulenfeld,<sup>177</sup> whilst 'the one really decent girl is Paula Schachl', who, since the situation for the 'loss of the girl's virginity does not accrue', 'remains bourgeoisie and decent'.<sup>178</sup> It would not be overstating the case to suggest that the very course of Doderer reception is more or less determined by the critics' reactions to the 'Stoff' of his works.

To Schröder's rather paltry list of critical voices raised against Doderer may be added those of Humbert Fink,<sup>179</sup> George Steiner,<sup>180</sup>

Claudio Magris,<sup>181</sup> whom Schröder only mentions in passing, and, of course, Emil Franzel,<sup>182</sup> the ideological premises of whose criticism presumably disqualified him from inclusion in Schröder's elite list. All in all, however, one cannot help but conclude that Schröder is justified in his scathing attack on Doderer scholarship. Equally undeniable is the fact that Schröder's Apperzeption und Vorurteil. Untersuchungen zur Reflexion Heimito von Doderers,<sup>183</sup> together with Anton Reininger's Die Erlösung des Bürgers. Eine ideologiekritische Studie zum Werk Heimito von Doderers,<sup>184</sup> forms a watershed in Doderer criticism. What these two deserve credit for most of all is their unmasking of those critics who had willingly overlooked the fact that Doderer, like any other writer, was a prisoner of the ideology of the society he wrote in and for. As Robert Escarpit rightly suggests, a writer can adopt this ideology or reject it partly or totally, but he cannot escape it, he cannot stand outside it.<sup>185</sup> Like any other author, Doderer was 'propagandist', though not, of course, in the simple sense, which usually implies influencing public opinion on some matter by suggestion or manipulation, but in the sense that he adopted a view or theory of life which, through his work, he tried to persuade the reader to follow. By calling attention to the absurdity of Doderer's 'Ideologie der Ideologielosigkeit', as Benedek had so aptly described it as early as 1956,<sup>186</sup> Reininger and Schröder must be credited with having paved the way for a 'new beginning' in Doderer research. Yet what the two themselves failed to do was to separate their criticism of Doderer the man from that of Doderer the novelist. All too frequently they, too, confused ethical with aesthetic criticism. Moreover, Schröder in particular failed to reflect sufficiently on the historicity of his own judgments and on the ideological presuppositions on which his own approach was based, best exemplified by his sweeping statements on 'typically bourgeois' phenomena, such as the 'happy ending' in Die Strudlhofstiege<sup>187</sup>

- despite William M. Johnston's claim that it is 'nearly impossible to detect any ideology in Schröder'.<sup>188</sup> Finally, and most importantly, Schröder himself was no less guilty of interpreting Doderer - albeit from a diametrically opposed viewpoint - in terms of his own theory than were the critics he so convincingly discredited. For Schröder, too, failed to recognize that Doderer's theory, which is the basis of the former's criticism, is, as Wolfgang Düsing has recently suggested, of only very relative value for an assessment of his novel practice.<sup>189</sup>

In the most recent full-length publication on Doderer, Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler declares:

Die Zeitläufe nach Doderers Tod waren der Verbreitung seines Werks nicht förderlich. Die Politisierung der Literatur um 1968 schien der Umformung des Direkten, der Akzentuierung der Form vor den Inhalten, ja der 'konservativen' Haltung Doderers radikal entgegengesetzt. Es wurde bei vielen Kritikern und Germanisten Brauch, sein Werk mit Hochmut zu übergehen oder ihn als Verfechter überholter Positionen zu attackieren. In den letzten Jahren ist das anders geworden.

Die Distanz ermöglicht ein Urteil, das nicht auf Kritik zu verzichten braucht, aber auf eine Lektüre jenseits der gefaßten Vorurteile beruht.<sup>190</sup>

Yet there is surprisingly little of this newly-found objectivity to be found in recent academic criticism of Doderer. The 1978 publication of Heimito von Doderer 1896 - 1966. Symposium anlässlich des achtzigsten Geburtstages. Wien 1976<sup>191</sup> is a clear reflection of how the polarization of opinion which, as already suggested, is characteristic of the primary reception of Doderer, has become equally manifest in academic criticism. With the sole exception of Schmidt-Dengler's own contribution, the papers are characterized by the very preconceptions which Schmidt-Dengler hopes

have now been overcome.

Of all the full-length studies dedicated to Doderer hitherto, Georg Schmid's Doderer lesen<sup>192</sup> is undoubtedly the most idiosyncratic. Although marred by a highly esoteric and deliberately fragmentary style, Schmid's monograph is nevertheless a valuable first attempt to view Doderer in a broader, 'socio-cultural' and historical context which includes reception. Although many of Schmid's conclusions are justified, his argument is, on the whole, based on generalizations which he fails to support with documentary evidence. Thus his claim that Doderer has always been read as a traditionalist contrasts starkly with the almost compulsively defensive attempts to illustrate Doderer's 'modernity' which can be found at frequent intervals throughout the reviews;<sup>193</sup> even Schmid's 'innovatory' comparison with Kafka was pre-empted by Dorothea Zeemann as early as 1958 in a review of Ein Mord den jeder begeht.<sup>194</sup> Nevertheless, Schmid is one of the few researchers to acknowledge the vital significance for Doderer reception of the author's 'image' and the critics' preoccupation with the subject matter of his works.

If the ultimate aim of Schröder's criticism was to arouse fresh interest in Doderer rather than to defame him, his hopes have certainly not been fulfilled by academic critics hitherto. Since 1976 one solitary doctoral thesis, Gabriele Kucher's highly esoteric and linguistically almost incomprehensible Thomas Mann und Heimito von Doderer: Mythos und Geschichte. Auflösung als Zusammenfassung im modernen Roman,<sup>195</sup> has been presented in West Germany. Admittedly, the picture is somewhat less bleak in Doderer's native Austria, with three dissertations, notably all in Vienna (again excepting Bernd Herta's short 'Diplomarbeit' mentioned above). In the United States, on the other hand, the relatively sustained academic interest, particularly in Die Dämonen, to which four of the five theses

presented there since 1976 have been devoted, contrasts sharply with the reception accorded to Doderer's novels, as the examination of Doderer in America in Chapter Two of this thesis will reveal. Nevertheless, one further sign of the continuing academic interest in Doderer in America is Michael Bachem's Heimito von Doderer,<sup>196</sup> the first full-length study on Doderer to be published in English, which is, however, a disappointingly superficial monograph. All in all, though, it is safe to say that, far from being stimulated by the critical impulses provided by Reininger and Schröder, academic interest in Doderer has visibly waned since 1976. Thus the 1982 edition of the standard bibliographical Germanistik contains a grand total of two references to Doderer.

On the other hand, a far more alarming tendency in Doderer research has raised its head in recent years. As early as 1973, Dietmar Grieser had been inspired by the Strudlhofstiege to embark on a series of literary expeditions to compare certain actual locations with their poetic presentation.<sup>197</sup> Grieser's feuilletons make no pretensions to academic value, and are intended as a light-hearted look at the settings of famous literary works. Yet Grieser's reports of how school classes had held their lessons on the Strudlhofstiege, German 'Abiturienten' had chosen the 'Stiege' for their final class outing, and how Doderer's widow had looked after the steps like a good 'femme ménagère',<sup>198</sup> do indicate a trend away from Doderer's work towards the superficialities with which he is so easily identified.

That this trend has since begun to make itself felt in academic criticism, is revealed in Engelbert Pfeiffer's 'Heimito von Doderer in Döbling',<sup>199</sup> where a great deal of intellectual acumen has obviously been wasted trying to establish exactly where and when Doderer lived in Döbling. Would it be churlish to question the value of the discovery that a certain German Baron Otto Dressel-Uylefeldt lived in Döblinger Hauptstraße in 1928?<sup>200</sup>

There can be little doubt that Pfeiffer's biographical approach will inevitably lead to speculations of the following order: 'Möglicherweise war es Gusti Hasterlik selber, die Heimito von Doderer mit Mary K. bekanntgemacht hat, wenn die Erwähnung in den Dämonen, Seite 663, autobiographisch ist.'<sup>201</sup> It will also lead to intriguing, but fundamentally trivial statements such as the following: ' - wer es war, muß diskret verschwiegen bleiben ...'<sup>202</sup> In his recently published Heimito von Doderers Alsergrund-Erlebnis,<sup>203</sup> Pfeiffer again chooses to adopt the biographical approach to Doderer's novels. Although Pfeiffer makes some interesting attempts to analyse the symbolic function of the diverse domiciles of the major characters from Doderer's 'Viennese' novels, one nevertheless wonders if it is really important whether Doderer had in mind house number 37, 39, 41 or 43 when he spoke of Melzer's flat.<sup>204</sup> Similarly, questions such as 'who was Paula Schachl?',<sup>205</sup> revelations of the identity of a variety of 'models' for Doderer's characters, or speculations as to what the 'Hausmeister', Herr Nowotny, must have thought of Doderer's visits to the residence of the widow Mary Kornfeld,<sup>206</sup> add nothing to our understanding of Doderer's fiction and are at times nothing better than speculative and superfluous gossip.

Yet, far from being discredited as irrelevant to literary and aesthetic evaluation, the biographical approach appears to have gained in popularity in recent Doderer research. In a doctoral thesis entitled 'Autobiographical Elements in Heimito von Doderer's Die Dämonen',<sup>207</sup> Peter Alexander Batke, who sees himself as something of a 'Lieutenant Kojak, the latter-day Sherlock Holmes',<sup>208</sup> sets out to demonstrate how Doderer's novel is nothing less than a 'masked biography of the author that covers the time span from 1915 to the 1950's, from the author's youth to his maturity as a scholar and novelist'.<sup>209</sup> Batke finds the theoretical justification for his approach in works by Heiner Willen-



berg, Dorothea Ludewig-Thaut and Erwin Leibfried,<sup>210</sup> which he describes as "revolutionary" in the sense that they extend the scope of literary analysis to include both the author and the text',<sup>211</sup> a curious description of an age-old and infamously inadequate approach to literary scholarship.

Batke himself claims that his 'strategy for interpreting Die Dämonen will rival the novel in complexity',<sup>212</sup> but, quite apart from the fact that some sixty pages of his study are taken up by an 'outline of the novel', Batke chooses, in the absence of an authoritative Doderer biography, to speculate rather than research. Thus Batke shows no signs of having been aware of Doderer's stormy relationship with Dorothea Zeemann, and, much more importantly, all but ignores the crucial experience which Doderer underwent when writing Die Dämonen, his initial fascination by, and subsequent rejection of the Nazi ideology. Consequently, Batke describes the years between 1930 and 1937 as a 'time when Doderer made the change from the respectably bourgeois academic life to a bohemian journalistic and artistic existence'.<sup>213</sup> For the same reason, Batke interprets the historical setting as a 'frame for the autobiographical montage',<sup>214</sup> and insists that the events on July 15 are 'merely a device to bring the novel to a climactic conclusion',<sup>215</sup> a fundamentally misguided viewpoint which totally ignores the essentially political nature of the novel.

Batke prefaces his study with a sketchy look at secondary literature on Doderer, which he concludes with a programme for future research: '... the novels of Doderer, his thought, his theory and his practice should be presented in a series of monographs and comprehensive presentations of his whole work in terms of his biography. The work on Thomas Mann in Germany can serve as a convenient paradigm for what needs to be done for Doderer.'<sup>216</sup> Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler relates how Doderer's

aversion towards Germanists stemmed from his resentment of purely positivistic works, 'worin über die Biographie eines Schriftstellers alles und über sein Werk so gut wie nichts zu finden ist. Denn die Person des Schriftstellers verschwinden zu lassen, darum ging es Doderer.'<sup>217</sup>

What has been all too frequently overlooked in recent Doderer research is the fact that the extrapolation of biographical details from Doderer's works is a reversal of the creative process itself, which consisted for Doderer in the 'Überwindung des Direkt-Autobiographischen'.<sup>218</sup> It can only be hoped that Batke's belief that 'it is the autobiographical that provides the fascination and the depth in Doderer's novels'<sup>219</sup> will find little echo in future Doderer research.

Unfortunately, however, another example of the total inadequacy of any biographical approach to literary criticism can be found in the recently published Doderer and the Politics of Marriage: Personal and Social History in 'Die Dämonen',<sup>220</sup> by Bruce Irvin Turner. In an attempt to determine Doderer's 'niche in the political spectrum',<sup>221</sup> Turner endeavours to establish the novelist's attitudes towards his own past by examining the various 'prismatic refractions of Doderer's own character' which can be found in Die Dämonen.<sup>222</sup> Thus Turner equates the figures Schlaggenberg and Herzka with Doderer's controversial period of membership in the Nazi party, while Stangeler's indifference to the burning of the Palace of Justice is taken to reflect Doderer's own passive apoliticism during World War II.<sup>223</sup> More importantly, Turner insists that the novel clearly shows that Doderer had his reservations about Stangeler's disinterested, almost fatalistic attitude towards political reality; this is reflected, Turner maintains, in Geyrenhoff's decision - in connection with Quapp's inheritance - to become an 'actor' himself, regardless of the 'relative myopia of vision connected with action'.<sup>224</sup> Hence, Turner concludes,

'in the figure of Geyrenhoff ... Doderer appears to admit that he should have acted politically following his renunciation of Nazism.'<sup>225</sup> Yet what Turner completely fails to take into account is the fact that Geyrenhoff's attempts to become actively involved in the mystery surrounding Quapp's legacy meet with total failure, and, ironically, prove to be totally superfluous anyway.<sup>226</sup> Once again it is quite evident that any attempt to gain insights into Doderer's life from what he has written are doomed to failure from the outset by the complexity of the author's 'refractions' of his autobiographical reality. More to the point, this is not the purpose of literary interpretation.

Two of the most recent publications on Doderer again reflect the trend away from the work towards the man, although admittedly neither of these publications would pretend to be an academic treatise. Michael Horowitz's Begegnung mit Heimito von Doderer<sup>227</sup> is a first attempt at a biography of the author, a quite legitimate undertaking in its own right. On the whole, though, Horowitz's 'Versuch einer Biographie'<sup>228</sup> is little more than a rehash of the biographical details already well-known from Doderer's primary reception - Horowitz leans particularly heavily on a long article on Doderer in Der Spiegel<sup>229</sup> - and from Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer,<sup>230</sup> spiced with a few additional reminiscences from Doderer's sister Astrid. Here too, as in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer, the contributors, with a few notable exceptions, manage to convey more about themselves than the author.

More significantly, the inveterate insistence on uncovering the 'models' for Doderer's figures is all too prevalent. Thus Horowitz declares: 'So wird aus dem Baron Dressl der Rittmeister von Eulenfeldt oder aus Benno von Grabmeier die Romangestalt des Stepski [ sic, = Samski? ]. Keine der Figuren, denen man in den wichtigen Romanen wie der Strudlhofstiege, den Dämonen oder den Merowingern begegnet, ist frei erfunden.'<sup>231</sup>

Similarly, Hans Weigel has the following to say of Marie Luise Wydler: '(ich habe den Verdacht, daß sie in seinen [Doderers] Romanen eine wichtige Rolle spielt, aber ich habe ihn nie danach gefragt und sie auch nicht).'<sup>232</sup> Finally, Helmut Qualtinger adds another piece of intriguing and highly uninformative gossip: 'Viele aus dem "Wiener Kulturleben" hat er [Doderer] nicht ausstehen können, wenn er deren Namen gehört hat, hat er schon aufgeschrien. Die Namen kann ich leider nicht nennen, weil die meisten noch leben.'<sup>233</sup>

The logical culmination of the tendency to concentrate more on the man than on the author and his work is Dorothea Zeemann's outstandingly superfluous 'revelations' in Jungfrau und Reptil,<sup>234</sup> a book which sent shockwaves throughout the Doderer community and provoked the headline 'Skandal um Doderer' in the FAZ.<sup>235</sup> Zeemann's picture of a decrepit, sexually perverted, urine-smelling, aging Doderer stands in sharp contrast to the image conveyed in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer by admiring friends (including Zeemann herself), and undoubtedly explodes the myth nurtured hitherto that a 'second marriage in 1952 to Maria Emma Thoma signalled a newly found equilibrium in the writer's life'.<sup>236</sup> Yet do we really want to know that Doderer took out his teeth at night<sup>237</sup> or that his backside lost its elasticity as he grew older?<sup>238</sup> Is it really significant that Zeemann was Doderer's 'heimliche Geliebte',<sup>239</sup> and his second wife a mere 'Magd'?<sup>240</sup> Does it help our understanding of his work to know that Zeemann was repeatedly the victim of Doderer's 'ohnehin nur gestische Gewalttaten',<sup>241</sup> that he 'beat' her with a velvet cat o' nine tails,<sup>242</sup> and that he bought a rope on their 'honeymoon' in Italy in order to tie Zeemann up in the hotel room?<sup>243</sup>

In a 'Plädoyer für eine Rezeptionsästhetik',<sup>244</sup> Manfred Durzak envisages a new form of literary criticism, in which the critic not only evaluates but reflects on the criteria on the basis of which he comes to a

particular conclusion, and on the extent to which this is determined by extrinsic, historical, political and sociological factors; for Durzak, this sort of criticism could claim a certain degree of general validity, since it would be reconstructable and controllable. If one considers the articles Dorothea Zeemann published on Doderer in the light of her 'relations' about her relationship with him, one ends up with something approximating to Durzak's demands. The results are predictably meagre. Although this is an exceptional case, one nevertheless finds it difficult to reconcile Zeemann's claims that she does not like much of what Doderer writes<sup>245</sup> with what she says in a review of Ein Mord den jeder begeht, for instance: 'Dieses Kapitel 41 zählt zum unvergänglichen "klassischen Bestand" der deutschen Prosa und darf neben Kleists Marionettentheater gestellt werden.'<sup>246</sup> More importantly, the inefficacy of Durzak's vision of a new form of literary criticism is underlined, for once again it is patently obvious that any form of literary criticism that concentrates more on the recipient than on the work will inevitably add very little to our understanding of the latter.

Nevertheless much of what Zeemann says will no doubt be taken to lend credence to the leftist argument that Doderer was nothing but an old fascist; thus she attributes the following comment to Doderer: 'Dieses millionenfach zu viel vorhandene Volk hat keine eigenen Daseinsrechte. Es hat keine schöpferische Disziplin.'<sup>247</sup> Or similarly: 'Sie betteln und verneigen sich - kein Stolz in dieser miesen Plebs - statt daß sie ihre Steine nach uns schmeißen.'<sup>248</sup> Yet the events related here took place over twenty years ago, and one would do well to take Zeemann's utterances with a pinch of salt. On the other hand, in view of the fact that Zeemann claims she even wrote under Doderer's name and received the fee, are we now to take what Doderer said cum grano salis, or even to set off on a feverish search for forgeries? Hardly. Hans Dichard,

editor of the Vienna Kurier, remarks that he was well aware of the fact that Doderer's column in the paper in the late 1950s owed more than a little to Dorothea Zeemann.<sup>249</sup> Yet if this at least has the effect of making Doderer researchers a trifle more sceptical towards the canonical value of the author's theoretical pronouncements, then Zeemann's impressionistic reminiscences might prove to be of some value to Doderer criticism after all.

One final academic paper must be mentioned to round off this survey of Doderer research: S. Belloin-Nebehay's 'L'œuvre romanesque de Heimito von Doderer vue par la presse'.<sup>250</sup> This useful, if somewhat superficial first attempt to analyse the primary reception accorded to Doderer's works is spoiled somewhat by a veritable plethora of factual inaccuracies, particularly in the dating of the reviews<sup>251</sup> and in the rendering of English quotations.<sup>252</sup> In addition, some of Belloin-Nebehay's sweeping statements illustrate the dangers of any sort of generalization about the complex process of reception. Thus she suggests that Doderer never achieved the same popularity in his native Austria that he enjoyed in West Germany.<sup>253</sup> She emphasizes that influential Austrian newspapers such as the Wiener Kurier, Salzburger Nachrichten and Tiroler Tageszeitung did not review Die Strudlhofstiege.<sup>254</sup> Quite apart from the fact that there was indeed a fairly positive review of this novel in the Wiener Kurier,<sup>255</sup> there was certainly no lack of reviews of Doderer's other works in the opinion-forming Austrian press. Belloin-Nebehay cites Hilde Spiel as having acknowledged implicitly that only 'well-informed critics' regarded Doderer as the foremost Austrian literary talent.<sup>256</sup> In reality, Spiel had the following to say: 'Österreich, aus dem er stammt, hat diesen seinen Propheten längst als solchen aufgenommen: In jeder ernstzunehmenden Sichtung eingeborenen Schriftstellertalents steht sein Name allen anderen voran.'<sup>257</sup> Belloin-Nebehay further supports her

argument by quoting the findings of a survey carried out by Die Welt on 'Die Bücher des Jahres 1963',<sup>258</sup> in which it is suggested that the disappointing sales figures for Die Wasserfälle von Slunj in Austria are attributable to the specifically Austrian nature of the novel, which is too familiar to the Austrians for them to appreciate it. What Belloin-Nebehay refrains from mentioning is that the writer of the article qualifies this by saying that Austrian books had been particularly popular in Austria, so much so that even an English book on an Austrian topic, Edward Crankshaw's The Fall of the House of Habsburg, sold extremely well.<sup>259</sup> Finally, Belloin-Nebehay quotes Armin Mohler, who says that Doderer's relationship to his native country was strained, and that recognition there came somewhat late in the day.<sup>260</sup> It would be more accurate to suggest that influential figures in the Austrian literary scene were understandably suspicious of a man with Doderer's political past, but that the very 'Austrianness' of his subject matter and the fact that any inhabitant of Vienna could recognize the topography of his works and speculate on the 'models' Doderer used for his figures, were directly responsible for his albeit belated but nevertheless undeniable success there.

On the other hand, Belloin-Nebehay blindly accepts Spiel's claim in the article cited above that Doderer managed to conquer America with his works, a claim which was, as we shall see, premature to say the least. Similarly, Belloin-Nebehay accepts the contention in the TLS that Doderer was a 'successor to the crown of Thomas Mann, the new Dostoevski, the focus of the shop window',<sup>261</sup> which again stand in sharp contrast to the reception of Doderer in Britain, where The Demons sold no more than 896 copies.<sup>262</sup> It is worth pointing out that Belloin-Nebehay attributes the relatively lukewarm response to Doderer in France and Italy to 'la démesure germanique, si étrangère au génie latin'.<sup>263</sup> Ironically, this allegedly

Germanic long-windedness was one of the main criticisms levelled at Doderer by American critics, and was no doubt one of the reasons for his lack of success there. On the other hand, Belloin-Nebehay rightly questions whether the rapid diffusion of a work of literature beyond the boundaries of its native country is necessarily a guarantee of the durability of the work, and concludes: 'Dans le cas de l'œuvre romanesque de H. v. Doderer, il est permis d'en douter.'<sup>264</sup> This necessarily raises the vexed question of Doderer's popularity today and of the endurance of literary works in general.

#### IV Doderer's Popularity Today and the Problem of Literary Endurance

When Doderer died in December 1966, the obituary writers seemed determined to outbid one another with superlatives describing the author and his work. Hilde Spiel, for instance, calls Doderer the greatest post-war Austrian writer,<sup>265</sup> and the writer signing himself jab describes Doderer's work as 'eine späte Summa Austriaca'.<sup>266</sup> Not without pathos, the anonymous reviewer in Bücherschiff proclaims: 'Ein Großer ist davongegangen, und wir müssen uns damit abfinden, ohne zu wissen, ob es einen Autor wie ihn noch einmal geben wird.'<sup>267</sup> Harald Kaufmann observes: 'Doderer hatte etwas von einem wienerischen Midas: was immer aus dem Alltag er angriff, verwandelte seine Hand in das Gold der Bedeutsamkeit.'<sup>268</sup> John Halding sees in Doderer a continuation of the 'nicht sehr opulente Reihe der wirklich weltgültigen deutschen Romandichter - über Thomas Mann, Hermann Broch und Robert Musil hinaus ...'<sup>269</sup> Brian Keith-Smith conjectures



that Doderer's novels, short stories and theoretical writings 'may well gain for him a reputation second to none in German epic writing since 1945'.<sup>270</sup> Piero Rismondo asserts: 'Nichts war ihm [Doderer] fremder als die Attitüde der Repräsentation. Ihn repräsentierte und repräsentiert sein Werk, und dieses repräsentierte und repräsentiert Österreich.'<sup>271</sup> Eugène Susini is one of many who maintain that Doderer ought to have been rewarded with a Nobel Prize.<sup>272</sup> Finally, Armin Mohler declares: 'Wir gäben viel darum zu wissen, ob man in 50 Jahren von Doderer zuerst als von einem Philosophen oder von einem Dichter sprechen wird.'<sup>273</sup>

If the necrologues on Doderer abounded with superlatives, they were merely a reflection of the widespread critical acclaim Doderer had enjoyed throughout the last fifteen years of his life. As early as 1954, Hans Flesch-Brunningen talked of Doderer as 'der bedeutendste, ja der einzige österreichische Schriftsteller'.<sup>274</sup> Two years earlier, Wolfgang Grözinger proclaimed: 'Als reine Kunstform, die uns zum freien, ästhetischen Genuß wird, hat er [der Roman] bei Doderer eine Verfeinerung und Bereicherung der Mittel erfahren, die kaum überbietbar sind ...'.<sup>275</sup> Doderer is repeatedly described as the most prominent living German novelist.<sup>276</sup> The uniqueness of his literary achievement is equally frequently emphasized: 'Die Strudlhofstiege läßt sich in keine literarische Kategorie einreihen, ist einmalig und erinnert höchstens an Jean Pauls blühenden Stil.'<sup>277</sup> This does not, however, prevent critics, in their frenetic efforts to 'locate' Doderer on the international literary spectrum after he shot to fame almost overnight with Die Strudlhofstiege, from seeking comparisons with universally acknowledged literary greats. Thus Hanns von Winter describes Doderer as 'Proust und Musil in einem',<sup>278</sup> whilst for Erich Korningen he was 'halb österreichischer Cervantes, halb wienerischer Boccaccio'.<sup>279</sup> Doderer is mentioned in the same breath as Homer,<sup>280</sup> Dante,<sup>281</sup> Goethe,<sup>282</sup> Calderon,<sup>283</sup> Balzac,<sup>284</sup> Romaines,<sup>285</sup> Rabelais,<sup>286</sup>

Thomas Mann,<sup>287</sup> Broch,<sup>288</sup> Hofmannsthal,<sup>289</sup> Joyce,<sup>290</sup> Dickens,<sup>291</sup>  
 Tolstoy,<sup>292</sup> Stendhal,<sup>293</sup> Raabe,<sup>294</sup> Stifter,<sup>295</sup> Jean Paul,<sup>296</sup>  
 Sterne,<sup>297</sup> and, of course, after the publication of Die Dämonen,  
 Dostoievski.<sup>298</sup> The following comment by Herbert Ahl is typical of the  
 attempts by the critics to place Doderer alongside the outstanding novel-  
 ists of the European tradition: 'Der Romancier Heimito von Doderer hat  
 durch sein bisheriges Werk ... den großen Roman fortgeführt, jenen großen  
 europäischen Roman, der in den Namen eines Stendhal, eines Balzac und  
 Flaubert, eines Dostojewski und Tolstoi, eines Galsworthy, eines Marcel  
 Proust und James Joyce, eines André Gide und eines Thomas Mann seine unaus-  
 löschlichen Glanzpunkte hat.'<sup>299</sup> At the same time Hans Flesch-Brunningen  
 insists that Doderer was anything but a 'Schwamm-Mensch': 'Es bleibt von  
 anderen Schriftstellern relativ wenig hängen.'<sup>300</sup>

Yet not only did Doderer provoke comparisons with such literary  
 giants, he was repeatedly ranked above many of them. Wolfgang Grözinger  
 assures the potential Doderer reader: 'Wie bei Faulkner sind stets mehrere  
 Schichten der Zeit gegenwärtig, aber mit solcher Kunst kontrapunktiert,  
 daß der berühmte Amerikaner dagegen primitiv erscheint.'<sup>301</sup> Hartmann Goertz  
 asserts: 'Doderer geht ... über Proust hinaus.'<sup>302</sup> Similarly, Michael  
 Hamburger declares: 'The naturalistic breadth of his [Doderer's] novels  
 is inseparable from his psychological range - by which I mean the range of  
 his sympathies and empathies - and this is greater than either Mann's or  
 Proust's.'<sup>303</sup> Elsewhere, Hamburger maintains that Doderer never had re-  
 course to 'the merely conventional lights to which Balzac, for instance,  
 resorted when his experience and imagination gave out'.<sup>304</sup> Günter Grack  
 proclaims: 'Wenn der Künstler das Inbild des homo ludens ist, dann ist  
 Doderer, verglichen mit Grass, sogar der größere: wenn dieser spielt, tut  
 er's mit dem Ernst des Kindes, für das Spiel Beruf ist, spielt aber jener,  
 behält er sich die Freiheit des Erwachsenen vor.'<sup>305</sup> Franz Sulke insists

that Musil's picture of 'Kakania' was a 'Zerrbild' which received its necessary corrective ('Wahrbild') in Doderer's Strudlhofstiege.<sup>306</sup> Gert Westphal says of the same novel:

Dieser Inhalt geht weit über Robert Musil hinaus, so wienerisch auch immer Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften gedacht war. Er war es in Abstraktion. Und er war es interpretatorisch. Hier verwirklicht sich die Stadt in der Geschichte, und Städte sind die großen Ortungen der Geschichtsträchtigkeit von Völkern und Räumen. Die Strudlhofstiege leistet für die deutsche Literatur, was uns seit John Dos Passos fehlt, und Doderer übertrifft den Amerikaner an kompositorischem Können um merckliche Grade.<sup>307</sup>

Finally, Kurt Lothar Tank had the following tribute to pay to the profundity of Doderer's thought in Die Dämonen: 'Allerdings ahnt man schon auf den ersten Seiten, und zu Ende des Buches weiß man es, daß in diesem ungewöhnlichen Autor ein weiser Mann namens Sokrates wiedergeboren wurde.'<sup>308</sup>

For a few years after Doderer's death, the publication of such works as Der Grenzwald and Frühe Prosa helped to sustain his apparently unchallenged literary ranking. Thus Rolf Lehnhard observed in 1968: 'Seit mehr als einem Jahr ist der Kronsessel der deutschen Literatur, den Thomas Mann, Gottfried Benn und Bertolt Brecht innehatten, wiederum verwaist ...'<sup>309</sup>

In December of the same year Hans Kricheldorf claimed that even Doderer's earliest publications fulfilled - at least partly - the very highest artistic demands, and concluded: 'Daß die vor Jahrzehnten entworfenen Arbeiten eines inzwischen Toten einer solchen Wirkung fähig sind, ist ein Beweis für die immer noch wachsende Bedeutung ihres Verfassers.'<sup>310</sup> Otto Frankfurter maintained as early as 1969 that Doderer had become an Austrian 'classic'.<sup>311</sup> Finally, in late 1969, the reviewer signing himself a.m. declared:

Das 'Dodereske' wird zu einem Begriff in der Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts. Es ist der eigenartige Widerspruch zwischen dem Verhaftetsein in naturalistischer Technik und einer beinahe transzendenten Gesinnung, die Doderer ähnlich der Proust'schen 'Suche nach der verlorenen Zeit' in die 'Tiefe der Jahre' steigen läßt, wobei komplexe Verstrickung von Vergangenem und Gegenwärtigem, Rationalem und Irrationalem sorgfältig geplant werden und nie dem sicheren Griff entgleiten.<sup>312</sup>

By the 1970s, however, Doderer's popularity was already beginning to wane. The findings of a symposium in 1971 on 'Österreichische Literatur in der Sicht des Auslandes',<sup>313</sup> of a survey in the same year of the reception of post-war German literature in various countries,<sup>314</sup> and of a further symposium in 1975 on the 'Rezeption der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur im Ausland',<sup>315</sup> offer a useful global corrective to some of the inflated claims made for Doderer quoted above. As early as 1971, Hans F. Prokop assures us that in those countries where Austrian authors are known at all, the main focus of interest is on Broch, Hofmannsthal, Kafka, Musil and Rilke, and, especially in the United States, on Werfel and Zweig.<sup>316</sup> Nonetheless, Francis Claudon maintains that Doderer is 'ziemlich berühmt' in France,<sup>317</sup> but this is relativized by Francois Bondy's claim that Doderer is a 'difficult' author who cannot match the success of Musil there,<sup>318</sup> and, more recently, by Belloin-Nebehay's suggestion that the reaction to Doderer in France was 'reserved'.<sup>319</sup> Similarly, Edmund Rosner's claim that Doderer, even though known to the Polish readership through works 'die sich stark von seiner eigentlichen Prosa unterscheiden',<sup>320</sup> namely Ein Mord den jeder begeht and Die Posaunen von Jericho, was nevertheless 'sehr bekannt' there,<sup>321</sup> is somewhat at variance with Norbert Honsza's report four years later, in which authors such as Piontek, Schallück, Krolow, Heißenbüttel, Bichsel, Wondratschek and Lettau are noted, but Doderer does not rate a mention.<sup>322</sup> In Italy, according to Anton Reininger,

Doderer's Strudlhofstiege was lost in a torrent of new fiction and did not find a readership.<sup>323</sup> Claudio Magris explains that Italian interest in German literature in recent years has been dictated strongly by a left-wing ideology, which would certainly account for Doderer's lack of success there.<sup>324</sup> Heinrich Böll and Günter Grass are clearly the most popular German writers in Scandinavia, where Doderer is not even considered worthy of mention.<sup>325</sup> In Yugoslavia, so Zlatko Gorjan maintains, Werfel, Rilke, Broch, Musil, Hofmannsthal, Schnitzler, Friedrich Torberg and Karl Kraus are the best known Austrian writers,<sup>326</sup> whilst in Turkey and India it is Stefan Zweig who has achieved most popularity.<sup>327</sup> We are assured that Heinrich Böll has obtained some measure of recognition in Brazil, but Doderer is again not mentioned.<sup>328</sup> The picture is no different in Eastern Europe, although it is significant that Mihai Isbasescu subsumes Doderer under the specifically Austrian phenomena in his survey of German literature in Romania.<sup>329</sup>

Despite the claim in the TLS in 1957 that Doderer was 'the foremost German-speaking novelist now living',<sup>330</sup> the latter was unable to make the impression of a Brecht, Böll or Grass on the British reading public.<sup>331</sup> In the United States it was not Doderer's Dämonen but Grass's Blechtrommel which signalled a turning point in the attitude of the American reading public towards post-war German literature.<sup>332</sup> M. Deen Larsen was undoubtedly right when he stated in 1974 that Doderer still awaited discovery by the American reader.<sup>333</sup> As already indicated, the reasons for Doderer's lack of success in America were manifold and complex and will be examined in detail in Chapter Two of this study.

It would seem safe to conclude, then, that, despite their hyperbolic claims on Doderer's behalf, the critics did not succeed in their aim of securing for the author an unchallenged place in the loftiest echelons of the literary canon. This is endorsed by a look at some representative

reference books. Of some two dozen non-German encyclopedias consulted, less than half mention Doderer. The value of such encyclopedias is admittedly extremely relative, as they are frequently riddled with inaccuracies - the Spanish Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada, for instance, informs us that Doderer's Umweg was published in three volumes in 1940, 1947 and 1951.<sup>334</sup> Nevertheless, they are a fairly accurate gauge of the durability of an author. Significantly, such standard works as the New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1982) or Encyclopedia Americana (1976) make no mention of Doderer, although the latest edition of the Grand Encyclopédique Larousse (1983) surprisingly does.<sup>335</sup> Even more important is the image with which Doderer is identified in those reference works which do dedicate a small article to him: the author is described as an arch-traditionalist,<sup>336</sup> and his work is consistently associated, indeed equated with Vienna.<sup>337</sup> This image is fortified, if not to say calcified in histories of literature and encyclopedias of world literature. Thus Geoffrey Grigson talks of Doderer as a 'great chronicler in an older tradition',<sup>338</sup> whilst J. P. Bier describes Doderer's 'conservative' conception of the novel as 'anachronistic'.<sup>339</sup> Helmut Olles's comments typify the critical reaction to the other major component of Doderer's stereotype image: 'In fast allen späteren Werken ist der bevorzugte äußere Ort Wien und seine Umgebung. Enthalten sie auch reizvolle Partien über Landschaft, so handelt es sich im ganzen doch um einen einzigen Roman der Wiener Gesellschaft ...'.<sup>340</sup> Once again it is obvious that Doderer is fast becoming nothing more than a marginal figure on the international literary spectrum.

Gone, too, are the heady days of comparisons with Homer, Dante and Boccaccio. Recent comparisons have been much more modest. William M. Johnston has suggested that Doderer 'stands less as a continuer of Musil and Broch than as a rival of the fantasts Herzmanovsky and Gütersloh'.<sup>341</sup> One critic has even gone so far as to compare Doderer's characterization

with that of Enid Blyton.<sup>342</sup> There can be little doubt that Rolf Vollmann was justified in his inclusion of Doderer in a list of authors whom he described as having been 'abgetan und weggesargt' by Wolfgang Beutin and others in their Deutsche Literaturgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, where Doderer is again not considered worthy of mention.<sup>343</sup>

The French literary sociologist Robert Escarpit wrote in 1966: 'We are now sufficiently well acquainted with the mechanics of literary life to appreciate that the writer proposes and the public disposes - and so it must be!'<sup>344</sup> Has then the public made up its mind and disposed of Doderer? Sales figures are an extremely malleable 'commodity', notoriously susceptible to manipulation by publishers, and any conclusions drawn from them can be at best extremely tentative. Nevertheless, a comparison of the up-to-date sales figures for Doderer's major novels with those supplied by Schröder in 1976 again support the view that Doderer's popularity has steadily declined in recent years. Admittedly, the paperback editions of Die Strudlhofstiege and Die Wasserfälle von Slunj would appear to be continuing to make an impression on the contemporary German literary market, with sales approximating 30,000 and 10,000 respectively since 1976.<sup>345</sup> Doderer's other works have, however, found it much more difficult to sustain sales, and the Biederstein Verlag has, albeit reluctantly, admitted that interest in Doderer has visibly waned in recent years.<sup>346</sup> It is worth noting that Biederstein's claim that the most recent impression of Die Dämonen, in 1979, numbered 7,700 copies (of which at least 5,000 have already been sold), giving a total of 32,000 copies printed hitherto, is curiously at odds with their own contention that the 1973 edition brought the total to 28,000.<sup>347</sup> This is not merely captious hairsplitting but an attempt to foster a healthy scepticism towards sales and publicity orientated publishers. One must be equally sceptical of Biederstein's claims about two translations of Doderer's works which have recently appeared in

the USSR (Die Wasserfälle von Slunj and Die Erzählungen): 'Die Auflagen dort sollen beträchtlich sein (möglicherweise 50.000 Exemplare pro Titel).'<sup>348</sup> Much more convincing is their claim: 'Relativ gut werden seine [Doderers] Werke noch in Österreich verkauft.'<sup>349</sup> Remembering Armin Mohler's question quoted above as to whether Doderer would be best remembered as a poet or as a philosopher fifty years after his death, one is tempted to ask whether he will be remembered at all in 2016,<sup>350</sup> for it would seem as if Doderer's prophetic words uttered in 1961 that 'in twenty years all of us will be gone, nobody will be known any more,'<sup>351</sup> have almost come true.

How is it possible that an outstanding literary figure should fall so completely from literary favour that Georg Schmid was moved to write in 1978: 'das vielleicht bedeutendste literarische Œuvre der jüngsten (Kultur-) Geschichte Österreichs gilt heute international nichts'?<sup>352</sup> Robert Escarpit, whose theories of periodicity in literature, based as they are on a seventy year cycle (among other things),<sup>353</sup> might well have appealed to Doderer, provides some simple answers. Basing his arguments on statistical data, Escarpit maintains that the novelist in the twentieth century 'peaks' between the ages of 25 and 30,<sup>354</sup> is carried by a readership which is faithful to him and ages with him until it eventually becomes less and less influential in the opinion-forming process.<sup>355</sup> Escarpit here discerns a periodicity of 15 years, after which the author's popularity decreases and possibly disappears altogether.<sup>356</sup> Thus the critical period in a novelist's production is around the age of forty, and the image with which he is associated, the figure with which he is identified in world literature corresponds approximately to that which he presented as a forty-year-old. Despite obvious exceptions, Escarpit insists that his theory is 'statistisch gesehen durchaus richtig'.<sup>357</sup> Hence Escarpit arrives at his absurd 'first Lehman's law'<sup>358</sup> (the pun is not intentional, but



uncannily apt), according to which the works written by an author before his fortieth birthday have a better chance of endurance than those written later in life.<sup>359</sup>

The reality of the individual case necessarily refutes Escarpit's statistical theories and highlights the absurdity of any attempts to turn literary research into a 'scientific' discipline by applying empirical laws to literature. In Doderer's case the process of failure, success and subsequent failure was unusually complex and inextricably bound up with the historical situation in which it took place. One of the aims of this study is to illustrate how a 'false' or distorted and inadequate reception was at least partly responsible for Doderer's short lived success and his current fall from literary grace. At the same time it must not be overlooked that it is a not uncommon phenomenon for apparently forgotten works of literature to regain popularity in another age, and it is quite conceivable that, given favourable prerequisites - mainly extra-literary in nature - Doderer's work might well be resurrected by generations to come.

Yet the very fact that such oscillations are possible undermines not only the reliability of the current literary canon or norm but the authority of the literary critic himself. There are two basic views on the endurance of literary works in the canon of high literature. On the one hand there is the belief in something akin to 'historical justice' which determines the aesthetic quality of a work of art in the long run in a sort of Darwinistic process of natural selection.<sup>360</sup> Conversely, there is the view that endurance is dependent on a variety of changing ideologies and that the upper or ruling class imposes its opinion on the rest of society.<sup>361</sup>

The seductively naïve view that quality alone determines literary endurance is difficult to reconcile with history. The great problem for all those who argue in favour of some sort of intrinsic quality in the work

itself arises in the face of the discontinuity of the evaluation of such major literary figures as, for example, Homer, Shakespeare and Hölderlin. It is also a well-known fact that most ancient classics were held in no regard for centuries and resurrected only in the Renaissance. The dogmatic insistence on the existence of a set of 'timeless' aesthetic values which determine the aesthetic canon is often nothing more than a convenient and complacent contrivance to justify the contemporary norm without acknowledging its historical determinants.

There is, then, as Jeffrey Sammons maintains, every evidence to suggest that endurance is not safely intrinsic to the literary work alone.<sup>362</sup> Yet at the same time it is equally difficult to accept Escarpit's attempt to deny the possibility of indefinite endurance:

'Universell' oder 'ewig' sind die Schriftsteller, deren kollektive Grundlage im Raum oder in der Zeit besonders ausgedehnt ist, d.h., die ihre 'Stammesbrüder' oder ihre Zeitgenossen in größerer Entfernung finden. Molière ist für den Franzosen des 20. Jahrhunderts noch jung, weil seine Welt noch lebt und uns mit ihm noch ein Kultur-, ein Anschauungs- und ein Sprachkreis verbindet, weil seine Komödie für uns noch aufführbar ist, weil seine Ironie uns noch zugänglich ist. Aber der Kreis wird immer kleiner und Molière wird altern und sterben, wenn das stirbt, was unser Kulturtypus noch mit dem Frankreich Molières gemeinsam hat.<sup>363</sup>

What Escarpit fails to consider is how it is, then, that Molière's contemporaries did not survive along with him. Curiously enough, despite his pronouncements on Molière's inevitable literary demise, Escarpit does not envisage a continuing deterioration and ultimate vanishing point in the endurance of an author, but clearly contradicts his own theory by maintaining that if a work survives its author's death by 10, 20 or 30 years it will be adopted in the literary canon.<sup>364</sup> Indeed Escarpit even goes so

far as to suggest that the endurance of a work is the characteristic that distinguishes it from all that is subliterary.<sup>365</sup> To overcome the problem of how some works are evidently more resistant to attrition than others, Escarpit coins the term 'creative treason',<sup>366</sup> according to which only through a kind of meaningful violation of the work's intentionality can it survive in a society for which it was not meant. More significantly, even such a convinced literary sociologist as Escarpit cannot circumvent the problem of literary endurance without acknowledging that there might be something inherent to the work which helps it to endure. He asks whether the likelihood of 'creative treason' taking place is not perhaps attributable to some specific quality in the work rather than in the audience.<sup>367</sup>

Escarpit is, then, unable to sustain his argument against the existence of literary endurance, and ultimately has to admit that there might be some sort of aesthetic quality in the work. The admission is surely inevitable, for tradition presupposes selection, and it is the criteria of selection that provide the key to the elusive phenomenon of literary endurance. Any outright denial of aesthetic quality implies complete cultural relativism, in which a used bus ticket is deemed as valuable as a Shakespeare drama.

E. D. Hirsch is much more convincing when he asserts that, although the historicity of an interpretation is an undoubted fact, it is wrong to conclude from this that the meaning of a text varies from age to age, since this would necessarily imply the indeterminacy of textual meaning. On the contrary, as Hirsch suggests, the meaning of a text is linguistic, i.e. communal, self-identical and reproducible.<sup>368</sup> It is not the meaning of the text which changes in time, but the meaning of the text to its construer, in other words, the significance of the text.

It would seem safe to conclude that Doderer's literary rise and fall,

like any other author's, were dependent neither solely on extra-literary factors such as the flux of historical time, nor solely on aesthetic or inner-textual factors, but - predictably - on a mixture of the two. The course of Doderer reception is not merely a reflection of the passing whims of fickle literary taste, but of reactions provoked by the specific character of Doderer's texts in a given historical situation. And although it is generally acknowledged that it is possible for a text to develop more energies than the author consciously assigned to it,<sup>369</sup> the potential for this expansion of energies is, as Sammons wisely observes, to be found in the text, for the discerning critic discovers rather than invents. In the final analysis, the evaluation of a text is not a matter of pure arbitrariness. On the contrary, the work itself, what Link calls the unchangeable 'Werk-Sache',<sup>370</sup> is always the measure of its 'concretizations', and the vital question in a survey of Doderer reception is: what is it in Doderer's works that provokes the reactions which characterize this reception?

As for the ambivalent role of the literary critic in literary life, there is much evidence to suggest that Manfred Durzak is justified when he says: 'Literarische Kritik erreicht offensichtlich am allerwenigsten das, was sie nach außen hin anzustreben scheint: nämlich den bleibenden Rang bestimmter neuer Werke festzustellen und sie einem hierarchischen Kanon verbürgten Kulturbesitzes einzufügen.'<sup>371</sup>

## V The Choice of Texts

'Doderer ist der Autor zweier Riesenromane, die innerlich zusammenhängen. Das sind Die Dämonen und Die Strudlhofstiege. Ferner schrieb er, in Unterbrechung der Arbeit an den Hauptwerken, Erzählungen und Romane wie Ein Mord den jeder begeht und Die Merowinger.'<sup>372</sup> Curt Hohoff's brief summary of Doderer's artistic production is paradigmatic of a stereotype view of the author's work which pervades Doderer reception. In the circumstances, it might seem odd, if not downright illogical to choose 'minor' works such as Ein Mord den jeder begeht and Die Merowinger as starting points for an analysis of Doderer reception. Yet, ironically, it is in the very 'atypicality' of these works that their ultimate value for this analysis lies.

The most valuable contribution made by Jauss to reception theory was undoubtedly his introduction of Karl Mannheim's concept of the 'horizon of expectations' into contemporary literary criticism. Although, as already indicated, Jauss was rightly criticized for the impracticability of his theory of the 'reconstruction of the horizon of expectations', since there is no way of recovering the experience of a total readership, it would nevertheless be foolish to dismiss his ideas as completely useless. For Jauss also borrows from Karl Popper the concept of the 'disappointment of expectations' as a valuable theoretical postulate. The latter maintains that we become aware of many expectations only when they are disappointed, for example when we come upon an unexpected step, since only the unexpectedness of the step shows us that we had expected an even surface.<sup>373</sup> Jauss himself chooses to apply this concept to an illumination of the social function of literature, insofar as the reader of the work of literature is 'privileged' by being confronted with situations or

'obstacles' in the text which he has not yet encountered in life, so that his experience of life is enriched by his reading.<sup>374</sup> But the idea of the disappointment of expectations could be much more fruitfully applied to the more specifically literary context of the reception of an individual text. For the expectations and deep-rooted prejudices with which a critic approaches a text are never more manifest than when they are disappointed. These presuppositions can be determined by social and cultural tradition, or, more commonly, they can be expectations, indeed demands of what an author ought to write - based on what he has written hitherto; but invariably they are most readily 'reconstructable' when they are not satisfied.

One chapter of this study will be devoted to the reception of Ein Mord den jeder begeht, with a short excursus on the adaptation of the novel for television, and a further chapter will take as its starting point the critical response to Die Merowinger. The aims of these chapters differ in emphasis. The chapter dedicated to Ein Mord den jeder begeht will concentrate more on textual analysis than that on Die Merowinger, in which broader connections in Doderer reception will be examined. The basic presupposition for the analysis of Ein Mord den jeder begeht is that, as E. D. Hirsch maintains, 'the distinguishing feature of a text is that from it not just one but many disparate complexes of meaning can be construed.'<sup>375</sup> Thus it is possible for one important complex of meaning clearly compatible with the properties of the text to be completely overlooked or inadequately received or at best viewed from a clearly misguided perspective. An examination of the reasons for such an 'incomplete' reading of the text will at the same time highlight weaknesses and prejudices characteristic of the primary reception of Doderer's works, and must be understood as a foil to the existing criticism of Ein Mord den jeder begeht.

With Die Merowinger, the problems only mildly perceptible in the reaction to Ein Mord den jeder begeht but central to Doderer reception, become more evident. The survey of the reviews of this novel is essentially a stepping stone to an examination of the reception accorded to the 'Massif central' of Doderer's work, the so-called 'Viennese trilogy'. For although Doderer's reception was, after his belated 'arrival' on the literary scene in 1951, determined in part by the prevailing political atmosphere and partly by the extraneous influences which pervade literary life, it was above all an overhasty and unreflect-ed identification of the author with these 'Viennese' novels that characterized the reception of his works from 1956 onwards. The ultimate aim of this study is to present a balanced picture of Doderer reception in its historical context and to 'demythologize' the image which author and critics combined - consciously or unconsciously - to create.

## Notes

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2. Ibid., p.10. (First published in Sewanee Review, 54 (1946), 468-487.)
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4. Ibid., p.189.
5. Ibid., p.184.
6. Ibid., p.178. See Brecht, 'Anmerkungen zur Oper "Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny"', in Bertolt Brecht, Gesammelte Werke in acht Bänden, Frankfurt am Main (Suhrkamp), 1967, VII, 1004-1016 (p.1006).
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8. Wimsatt and Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy', op. cit., p.3.
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11. See, for instance, Gunter Grimm's synopsis of criticisms levelled at Jauss in Gunter Grimm, 'Einführung in die Rezeptionsforschung', in Literatur und Leser: Theorien und Modelle zur Rezeption literarischer Werke, edited by Gunter Grimm, Stuttgart (Reclam), 1975, pp.11-84, especially pp.30-51.
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13. Hans Joachim Schröder, Apperzeption und Vorurteil: Untersuchungen zur Reflexion Heimito von Doderers, Heidelberg (Winter), 1976, p.2. In the East German Lexikon deutschsprachiger Schriftsteller, we are also assured that Doderer's works won him great acclaim in the 'Bürgertum' (Lexikon deutschsprachiger Schriftsteller. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, volume I, Kronberg Ts (Scriptor), 1974, p.159; Lizenzausgabe des VEB Bibliographisches Institut, Leipzig).
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15. D.W. Fokkema and Elrud Kunne-Ibsch, Theories of Literature in the Twentieth Century, London (Hurst), 1977, p.140.
16. Joachim Bark, 'Arbeitsbereiche einer kritischen Literatursoziologie', in Literatursoziologie: Band I: Begriff und Methodik, edited by Joachim Bark, Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln/Mainz (Kohlhammer), 1974, pp.11-19 (p.12).
17. W.K. Wimsatt Jnr and Monroe C. Beardsley, 'The Affective Fallacy', in The Verbal Icon, op. cit., pp.21-39 (p.31).
18. Northrop Frye, 'The Social Context of Literary Criticism', in The Sociology of Literature and Drama, edited by Elisabeth and Tom Burns, Harmondsworth (Penguin), 1973, pp.139-158 (p.142).



19. Ibid., p.143.
20. See, for example, Hannelore Link, Rezeptionsforschung: Eine Einführung in Methoden und Probleme, Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln/Mainz (Kohlhammer), 1976, p.85.
21. Harald Weinrich, 'Für eine Literaturgeschichte des Lesers', Merkur (Stuttgart), 21 (1967), pp.1026-1038. For a stimulating survey of the differences between 'Rezeptionsästhetik' and 'Wirkungsästhetik', see Roderick H. Watt, 'Self-defeating Satire? On the Function of the Implied Reader in Wolfgang Hildesheimer's Lieblose Legenden', Forum for Modern Language Studies (St. Andrew's), 19 (1983), no.1, 58-74.
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28. See, for example, Klaus Lubbers, 'Aufgaben und Möglichkeiten der Rezeptionsforschung', Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift (Heidelberg), 14 (1964), 292-302 (pp.301-302).
29. Ilse Strobl-Luckmann, 'Heimito und die Tiefe der Jahre', in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer, edited by Xaver Schaffgotsch, München (Biederstein), 1972, pp.158-163 (p.159).
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31. Horst Wiemer, 'Damals im Verlag mit Heimito', in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer, op. cit., pp.186-190 (p.188).
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39. Doderer, Tangenten, op. cit., p.497.
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41. Ibid., p.774.
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61. Anonymous, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Strudlhofstiege', Neues Buch (Borromäusverein, Bonn), no.19. 1952.
62. Franzel, 'Welt ohne Gott', op. cit., p.19. In an article entitled 'Hauptvertreter der Wiener Romandichtung der Gegenwart', the source and author of which are unknown, but a copy of which is held by the Biederstein Verlag in Munich, the writer says of Die Strudlhofstiege: 'Auffallend ist bei allen diesen Menschen, die doch der besseren Gesellschaft angehören, daß kein einziger von ihnen bei diesem Kreuz und Quer der Geschlechter untereinander irgendwelche sittliche Regungen oder Anwandlungen auch nur der leisesten Religiosität erkennen läßt.' (p.111).
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70. Jürgen Becker, 'Tangenten', Westdeutscher Rundfunk (Köln), 5 March 1965.
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78. Ibid., p.292.
79. Ibid., p.295.

80. Ibid., p.301.
81. Ibid., p.305.
82. Ibid., p.378.
83. Brunno Hannemann, 'Heimito von Doderer: Commentarii', Monatshefte (Madison, Wisc.), winter 1978.
84. Peter Pawlik, 'Romancier gegen die Wirklichkeit. Nostalgiker vor der Zeit', Die Zeit (Hamburg), 12 November 1976.
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91. Northrop Frye, 'The Social Context of Literary Criticism', op. cit., p.155.
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98. Compare Jost Hermand, 'Vom Gebrauchswert der Rezension', in Kritik der Literaturkritik, op. cit., pp.32-47 (p.34).
99. Lidén, '"Saltus Grammaticus"', op. cit., pp.245-292.
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103. Jan Papiór, 'Stand der Doderer-Forschung', Studia Germanica Posnaniensa (Poznań), 4 (1975), 21-30.
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335. Belloin-Nebehay points out that earlier editions ignored Doderer ('L'œuvre romanesque', op. cit., p.305). The following reference works also make no mention of Doderer: The World Book Encyclopedia (1981); Chamber's Encyclopaedia (1964); Encyclopedia Canadiana (1965); Australian Encyclopaedia (1958); Svensk Uppslagsbok (1964); La Grande Encyclopédie Larousse (1971); Encyclopaedia Universalis (Paris, 1968); Enciclopedia de México (1976); Gran Enciclopedia Rialp (Madrid, 1981); Diccionario Enciclopédico Salvat (Barcelona, 1964); Gran Enciclopedia Argentina (1956); Collins New Age Encyclopedia (1963).
336. See, for instance, Grote Winkler Prins, Amsterdam/Bruxelles (Elsevier), 1968, volume 6, p.458; Great Soviet Encyclopedia. A Translation of the Third Edition, New York (MacMillan) and London (Collier MacMillan), 1973 (original, 1970), volume 1, p.465.
337. See, for example, Lessico Universale Italiano, Roma (Istituto dell' Enciclopedia Italiana), 1970, p.481; Grote Winkler Prins, op. cit., p.458.
338. The Concise Encyclopaedia of Modern World Literature, edited by Geoffrey Grigson, London (Hutchinson), 1963, p.105.
339. J.P. Bier, 'Heimito von Doderer', in Moderne Encyclopedie van de Wereldliteratuur, Haarlem (De Haan), and Antwerpen (De Standaard), 1980, volume 3, p.33.



340. Helmut Olles, 'Heimito von Doderer', in Rowohlt Literaturlexikon 20. Jahrhundert, edited by Helmut Olles, Reinbeck bei Hamburg (Rowohlt), 1971, pp.213-215 (p.213).
341. Johnston, review of Schröder, Apperzeption und Vorurteil, op. cit., p.256.
342. Marks, 'The City in the Twentieth Century German Novel', op. cit., p.275.
343. Rolf Vollmann, 'Abgetan und weggesargt', review of Wolfgang Beutin and others, Deutsche Literaturgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, Stuttgart (Metzler), 1979, in Der Spiegel (Hamburg), 7 July 1980, pp.161-164 (p.163).
344. Robert Escarpit, The Book Revolution, London (Harrap), and Paris (UNESCO), 1966, p.151.
345. Die Strudlhofstiege, 1976: 27,000; 1983: 56,000-61,000; Die Wasserfälle von Slunj, 1976: 20,000; 1983: 27,000-33,000. Figures kindly supplied by Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag (letter to author, 10 March 1983). For the 1976 figures, see Schröder, Apperzeption und Vorurteil, op. cit., p.2.
346. Letter to author from Birgit von zur Mühlen, Biederstein Verlag, 30 August 1983.
347. See Biederstein's 1978 prospectus. See also Schröder's figures for 1976, in Apperzeption und Vorurteil, op. cit., p.2.
348. Letter to author, 30 August 1983. Subsequent attempts by the author to ascertain more precise details about these translations met with no success, as Biederstein were unable to provide any more information. Hence, these translations have not been included in the bibliography.
349. Letter to author, 30 August 1983.
350. Compare Mohler, 'Erkenntnis vollzieht sich nur in Sprache', op. cit.
351. Heimito von Doderer, unpublished diary entry, 8 December 1961, quoted by Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, 'On the posthumous papers of Heimito von Doderer', in 'An International Symposium in Memory of Heimito von Doderer (1896-1966)', Books Abroad (Norman, Okl.), 42 (1968), 343-384 (p.371).
352. Schmid, Doderer lesen, op. cit., p.157.
353. Escarpit, Das Buch und der Leser, op. cit., p.40ff.
354. Ibid., p.48f.
355. Escarpit, 'Erfolg und Überleben der Literatur', op. cit., p.76f.
356. Escarpit, Das Buch und der Leser, op. cit., p.49.
357. Ibid., p.34.
358. From the American psychologist Harvey C. Lehman, whose statistical data and experiments provide Escarpit with much of the material for his theories.
359. Escarpit, 'Erfolg und Überleben der Literatur', op. cit., p.74.
360. See, for instance, Wilhelm Emrich, 'Wertung und Rangordnung literarischer Werke', Sprache im technischen Zeitalter (Stuttgart, Köln),

12 (1964), 974-991.

361. See, for example, Escarpit, 'Erfolg und Überleben der Literatur', op. cit., p.75.
362. Sammons, Literary Sociology and Practical Criticism, op. cit., p.97.
363. Escarpit, Das Buch und der Leser, op. cit., p.117; see also Karl Erik Rosengren, Sociological Aspects of the Literary System, Stockholm (Natur och Kultur), 1968, p.83, where he argues that all classics, ancient and modern, 'are less and less remembered', and will eventually become the preserve of the much maligned literary historian alone.
364. Escarpit, Das Buch und der Leser, op. cit., p.33.
365. Ibid., p.104f.
366. Robert Escarpit, '"Creative Treason" as a Key to Literature', Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature (Bloomington, Ind.), 10 (1961), pp.16-21.
367. Robert Escarpit, 'The Sociology of Literature', in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, volume 9, New York (The MacMillan Co. and The Free Press), 1968, pp.417-425 (p.424).
368. Hirsch, Validity in Interpretation, op. cit., p.225.
369. See, for instance, Leibfried, Kritische Wissenschaft vom Text, op. cit., p.8.
370. Link, Rezeptionsforschung, op. cit., p.139.
371. Durzak, 'Plädoyer für eine Rezeptionsästhetik', op. cit., p.503.
372. Curt Hohoff, 'Dichter oder Kauz?', Rheinischer Merkur (Koblenz), 30 December 1966.
373. Karl R. Popper, 'Naturgesetze und theoretische Systeme', in Theorie und Realität: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre der Sozialwissenschaften, edited by Hans Albert, second, revised, edition, Tübingen (Mohr), 1972, pp.43-58 (p.45).
374. Jauss, 'Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft', op. cit., p.202.
375. Hirsch, Validity in Interpretation, op. cit., p.25.

# I

## EIN MORD DEN JEDER BEGEHT

### I Introduction

The most striking aspect of the documented criticism of Ein Mord den jeder begeht<sup>1</sup> is the virtually unanimous attitude of the critics towards the 'crime' element undoubtedly present in the novel. It is surely no coincidence that most critics seem eager to dissociate the novel from so-called 'Unterhaltungsliteratur' before embarking upon any attempt at an interpretation. Yet would it be churlish to suggest that the fact that Mord has been translated into more languages than any other of Doderer's works - it has appeared in Finnish (1961), Croatian (1962), Polish (1963), English (1964), Spanish (1966), Afrikaans (1968), Estonian (1974) and Italian (1983)<sup>2</sup> - has more than a little to do with its suggestive, if not to say prefigurative title? Kurt Lothar Tank explicitly refers to Mord as the novel with the 'Krimi-Titel',<sup>3</sup> whilst Hermann Fauler points out: 'Etwas kolportagehaft Sensationelles haftet diesem aufreiz-

enden Buchtitel an.'<sup>4</sup> Edwin Rollet, on the other hand, feels obliged to warn the unsuspecting reader that Mord is a novel whose contents do not have much to do with the title.<sup>5</sup> Finally, Wilhelm Müller is being perhaps unintentionally ironic when he describes the title of Mord as 'kriminell'.<sup>6</sup>

Taking the critics' reaction to the crime element implicit in the title of Doderer's novel as a starting point, we shall examine the author's use of the devices traditionally deployed in detective novels and relate this to the strict conventions of crime writing, in order to suggest a re-appraisal of this hitherto much misunderstood aspect of Mord. The narrator in Doderer's Strudlhofstiege wisely observes: 'jedes einzelweise Nennen ist bereits ein Übertreiben, ... ja, wesentlich Übertreiben wir schon, wenn wir nur irgendein Ding etwas schärfer in's Auge fassen.'<sup>7</sup> For this reason, our re-interpretation of the crime element in Mord should be understood not as a refutation of all that has been said hitherto about the novel, but as an attempt to counter-balance the criticism of Mord which has deliberately ignored this significant aspect of Doderer's work or dismissed it as irrelevant.

## II The Critical Response to the 1938 Edition

When Mord was first published in 1938, only a relatively small number of copies could be printed because of the lack of paper, and, Ernst Lewalter assures us, in view of the prevailing political situation, the novel had to be sold as it were under the counter to particularly

receptive readers.<sup>8</sup> This view is supported by the reviewer signing himself o.m.f., who declares in 1956: 'den Themen der Gewissensforschung und des dadurch Zu-sich-selbst-Kommens, das diese beiden Romane Mord und Ein Umweg von den verschiedensten Standorten stellten, war weder das politische noch das geistige Klima von 1938, dem Erscheinungsjahr der beiden [sic] Werke, günstig, so daß Doderer vergessen wurde ...'<sup>9</sup> What was expected, indeed demanded - at least officially - of a German novelist in 1938 is perhaps best illustrated by an article by Dr Hellmuth Langenbucher entitled 'Das schöngeistige Buch im Jahre 1938. Ergebnisse, Überlegungen, Wünsche'.<sup>10</sup> A selection of Langenbucher's prescriptive conclusions must suffice to exemplify the rigidity of the official notion of 'literature':

Es fehlt weiterhin die dichterische Gestaltung des deutschen Neubauerntums ...

Es fehlt weiterhin neben der Gestaltung des Kriegserlebnisses die Gestaltung des neuen Soldatentums, das sich aus der Reichswehr heraus zum neuen deutschen Volksheer entwickelte ...

...

Es fehlt an Gestaltungen des neuen Führertums, wie es im Nationalsozialismus seinen Ausdruck findet.

...

Es fehlt an Dichtungen, in denen das Wesen der neuen Volksgemeinschaft gestaltet wird.

Es fehlt immer noch der gute Sport-Roman ...

Es fehlt die gute 'Kraft-Durch-Freude'-Dichtung ...

Es fehlt auf dem Gebiete des Landschaft-Romans der gute Oberrhein-Roman.

...

Es fehlt weiterhin ... der gute Rasse-und Bluts-Roman.

Gerade auf diesem Gebiet aber wäre manch wichtige und schöne Aufgabe zu erfüllen.<sup>11</sup>

In the circumstances, one might indeed be forgiven for assuming that Doderer's novel went more or less unnoticed in 1938, since - at least on the surface - it in no way complied with the Nazi directives on literature. On the other hand, Levin L. Schücking's amusing tale of how the Nazis had to abandon the practice of recommending the six best books of the month, as the recommendations effectively ended the sale of the books,<sup>12</sup> should serve as a warning against an oversimplified conception of literary life in Nazi Germany. There is much evidence to suggest that, although Doderer's novel could scarcely be described as 'Blut- und Boden-Literatur', it nevertheless attracted considerable critical attention in 1938, so much so that it was even accorded a short, if rather unfavourable review in the TLS.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, most of the other reviews were lost when Doderer's publisher, Beck, suffered fire damage during the Second World War,<sup>14</sup> and there can be little doubt that those reviews now held in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna<sup>15</sup> do not represent an accurate picture of the actual critical reaction to Doderer's novel, as these are reviews which Doderer himself had kept and later sent to Dietrich Weber. Hitherto unknown articles such as the review in the TLS already mentioned and another by Ph. Leibrecht in Die neue Literatur<sup>16</sup> present a far more critical picture of Doderer. Thus Leibrecht concludes his article by saying: 'Der österreichische Schriftsteller ist nicht unbegabt für realistische Seelenschilderung, aber zu groß ist noch seine Lust an uferlos ausgesponnenen, schillernden Wort- und Gedankenspielen, lässig und anmutig schwebend wie der Rauch einer Zigarette. Der Rest ist Asche. Viel Asche.'<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, even the earliest extant review of Doderer's

novel is a harbinger of a stereotype response which was to pervade the critical reception of Mord: 'Man wird an einen Kriminalroman denken. Das ist es nicht, es ist ein Roman, den ein Dichter geschrieben hat.'<sup>18</sup> F. R. Wagner shares this opinion: 'Wenn es sich auch um die Ermordung und Be- raubung der ... Louison Veik handelt, so ist es doch kein Kriminal- roman ...'<sup>19</sup> Karl Rauch also reveals this innate distaste for 'crime writing': 'Vom Titel her möchte man sich abgeschreckt fühlen; aber die Enttäuschung, die man sehr bald nach begonnener Lektüre erlebt, ist eine höchst angenehme.'<sup>20</sup>

It comes as no surprise, then, to find that the 1938 'Verlags- prospekt' proves to be little more than a directive to the critic not to be tempted to confuse Doderer's novel with what the publishers obviously consider a 'sub-literary genre': 'Dieser erste große Roman des Österreichers Doderer ist kein Kriminalroman - außer man wollte Dostojewskis Raskolnikoff auch als einen solchen bezeichnen.'<sup>21</sup>

### III The Critical Response to the 1958 Edition

In 1958, Doderer's publishers saw fit to re-issue Mord, 'um die gegenwärtige Doderer-Konjunktur auszunützen',<sup>22</sup> as one cynic suggested. Coming in the wake of Doderer's startling success with Die Strudlhof- stiege and Die Dämonen, the reprint predictably aroused a far more widespread critical response than the original had succeeded in evoking twenty years earlier. Wolf Jobst Siedler outlines the thoughts prevalent in the reviewer's mind as he approaches such a re-issue: 'Man liest ein

solches Buch gleichsam mit rückwärts gewandter Neugier: was deutet schon dort auf die spätere Entwicklung hin, und war da schon - wenngleich unbemerkt - im Frühen die eigentümliche Größe des Späten angelegt?'<sup>23</sup>

It is a sad, but undeniable fact that such an approach is in many ways restrictive, for the foreknowledge of the author's subsequent achievements tends to divert the critic's attention from the novel he should be reviewing and to reduce the scope for a relatively dispassionate, open-minded reading of the work.

With Doderer's later achievements very obviously in mind, the critics repeatedly recommend this shorter novel as an appropriate introduction to the more demanding and voluminous epics of the 1950s:

Wir können dieses Buch vor allem jenen empfehlen, die Doderer noch nicht kennen, denn hier gewinnen sie den leichtesten Zugang zu dem oft schwierig anmutenden Werk dieses bedeutenden Dichters.<sup>24</sup>

Dem mit Doderer weniger vertrauten Leser bietet dieser Roman einen leichten Zugang zu den schwierigen Schöpfungen des Autors.<sup>25</sup>

Der Roman wird nicht nur interessante Aufschlüsse über die Anfänge der schriftstellerischen Tätigkeit Doderers vermitteln, sondern auch besonders geeignet sein, dem Autor neue Leser zu gewinnen, die über dieses Buch einen leichteren Zugang zu den späteren Werken Doderers ... finden können.<sup>26</sup>

Wer zu den späteren und kompositorisch schwierig angelegten Werken noch keinen Zugang hat, kann sich an diesem ... wohlfeil erschienenen Roman - einüben, 'eindodern'.<sup>27</sup>

... es wäre denkbar, daß mancher Leser über dieses im Verhältnis zur Strudlhofstiege und zu den Dämonen kleinere Werk leichter den Zugang zu jenen umfangreichen Romanen finden könnte.<sup>28</sup>

Once again the unusual consonance among the critics is no coincidence.



Here, too, the publishers' prospectus provides the key to the source of such unanimity: 'Darüber hinaus hält der Verlag den Roman für besonders geeignet, für den Autor neue Leser zu gewinnen, die über dieses Buch einen leichteren Zugang zu Doderers Werk finden werden.'<sup>29</sup>

As for the critics' reaction to the crime element in Mord, a by now familiar pattern emerges:

Dieses Buch ist kein Kriminalroman.<sup>30</sup>

Die Handlung ist allerdings sehr spannend, so elektrisierend wie in einem Kriminalroman, ohne dieser Gattung zugehören zu wollen.<sup>31</sup>

Es ist kein Kriminalroman, wenn auch ein Mord das tragende Moment der Handlung abgibt ...<sup>32</sup>

Es handelt sich nicht um einen 'Kriminalroman' ... Wie Doderer den Roman angelegt und ausgeführt hat, das macht ihn zu einem Kunstwerk, in dem es nichts Unnötiges und Zufälliges gibt.<sup>33</sup>

Doch handelt es sich keineswegs etwa um einen Kriminalroman ...<sup>34</sup>

Dennoch kann man diesen Lebensroman eines jungen Mannes nicht einen Kriminalroman nennen, wenn auch durchaus ein Mordfall vorliegt ...<sup>35</sup>

Doderers Buch sollten nur gereifte Leserinnen in die Hand nehmen. Denn es ist nicht etwa ein Kriminalroman, wie der Titel uns glauben macht.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, Hellmut Olles insists that Doderer has written an 'Entwicklungsroman' and not a detective novel as the title would have us believe. Olles goes on: 'Motive des Kriminalromans sind gewiß da, aber Doderer schmiltzt sie um in solche einer Lebensgeschichte ...'<sup>37</sup> The reviewer signing himself MPLH is equally quick to point out that Mord 'transcends the limitations of the [thriller] genre',<sup>38</sup> without attempting to

define these limitations.

Given the overwhelming and highly unusual unanimity of the reviewers, it again comes as no surprise to find that the text of the 1938 'Verlagsprospekt' appeared virtually verbatim in 1958: 'Dieses Buch ist kein Kriminalroman - außer man wollte Dostojewskis Raskolnikoff auch als einen solchen bezeichnen. Es ist der Lebensroman eines jungen Mannes, dem es in den Wirrnissen des Schicksals gelingt, sich selbst zu erkennen.'<sup>39</sup> As already suggested, the pernicious effects of the non-literary or extraneous influences on literary life, and particularly on reception, are all too easily overlooked. Yet it would be difficult to overestimate the role the publishers' advertising material plays on the reception of a work, and this is clearly reflected in the very terminology of the reviews, which is repeatedly predetermined by the suggestivity of the publishers' 'information' leaflet. Thus Doderer's publishers' reference to Dostolevski's Crime and Punishment is duly reproduced in the reviews:

Als der Mord vor zwanzig Jahren erschien, wurde er von der Kritik auch mit Dostojewskys Raskolnikow (Schuld und Sühne) verglichen. Aber nur insofern, als man ja den Raskolnikow zu nennen pflegt, wenn es gilt, die Behauptung aufzustellen, daß auch ein literarischer Kriminalroman möglich sei. Der Mord ist dafür ein noch besseres Beispiel, denn der 'Täter' kommt erst ganz am Schluss heraus, wie es der Leser von Kriminalromanen ja am liebsten hat ...<sup>40</sup>

Wie sich Doderer selbst als 'Romancier' bezeichnet, aber viel eher dichterischen Bezirken zuzuordnen ist, so erscheint auch das neu aufgelegte Werk rein äußerlich als 'Kriminalroman'. Tatsächlich handelt es sich dabei sowenig um einen solchen wie etwa Dostojewskis Raskolnikow.<sup>41</sup>

The idea suggested in the original 'Verlagsprospekt' issued in 1938 by

Doderer's publisher survives even until 1964, when we find in the 'Klappentext' of the first paperback edition of Mord: 'trotz spannungsreicher Elemente [ist es] kein Kriminalroman, oder doch nur soweit, wie Dostojewskis Raskolnikow ein Kriminalroman genannt werden kann.'<sup>42</sup> And even as late as 1966, the reviewer signing himself W.H. maintains that Mord is written 'in der Art Dostojewskis'.<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, not all critics accept the publishers' suggestions quite so willingly. The anonymous reviewer in the TLS, for instance, finds the 'publisher's comparison with The Brothers Karamazoff [sic] ... far-fetched'.<sup>44</sup> Friedrich Fabri appears to have read the 'Verlagsprospekt' a little more carefully, and is equally sceptical: 'Wie ein Kriminalroman klingt der Titel dieses Werkes. Und es kommt auch ein Mord darin vor ... Wollte man dieses Werk ... darum als Kriminalroman bezeichnen, so müßte man mit gleicher Konsequenz etwa Dostojewskis Raskolnikoff zu dieser Gattung zählen. Das wäre weit hergeholt. Gerade so weit hergeholt wie der Vergleich des Russen mit Doderer.'<sup>45</sup>

The American publisher of the English translation of Doderer's novel, Every Man a Murderer, also alludes in the advertising material to the crime element in the novel, but is as careful as Doderer's German publisher to set it apart from the conventional crime story: 'In von Doderer's hands, the unraveling of what appears to be a sordid case of homicide is raised to the level of high psychological drama.'<sup>46</sup> The results of such advertising are predictable. Carmen P. Collier, for instance, willingly regurgitates the publisher's thoughts: 'Although the title and the plot itself have the earmarks of a conventional "murder mystery", von Doderer's singular and brilliant technique take [sic] it out of the class of "whodunits" and raises it to the level of distinguished psychological drama.'<sup>47</sup>

#### IV The 'Literary Value' of the Detective Novel

It is clear from the reaction of Doderer's publishers and reviewers to the mere suggestion of an association between Mord and the 'crime novel' that the very mention of the latter conjures up singularly derogatory connotations. As Edgar Marsch points out: 'Zweifelloos war für das "gebildete" Publikum diese Unterregion der Literatur mit einem Tabu behaftet.'<sup>48</sup> Edmund Wilson was probably speaking for the majority of 'serious' critics when he described detective fiction as a 'field which is mostly on a sub-literary level'<sup>49</sup> and saw the writing of such works as 'the squandering of ... paper which might be put to better use'.<sup>50</sup> Even such a celebrated practitioner of the 'art' of crime writing as Dorothy L. Sayers admits that the detective story 'does not, and by hypothesis never can attain the loftiest level of literary achievement'.<sup>51</sup> And the distinguished English expert on crime writing, Julian Symons, maintains that 'even the best crime story is still a work of art of a peculiar flawed kind, since the appetite for violence and a pleasure in employing a conjurer's sleight of hand seem to be adulterating the finest skills of a novelist.'<sup>52</sup> The historian of detective fiction, A. E. Murch, concurs with this view and acknowledges that 'most detective novels, born as they are of ingenuity rather than of inspiration or true imagination, are neither art nor literature.'<sup>53</sup> Jan Knopf assures us that even in the 1950s the crime novel in Germany was still regarded as 'eine anrühige literarische Erscheinung'.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, as Ira Tschimmel points out: 'In den fünfziger Jahren steht ... lediglich zur Debatte, ob Kriminalromane generell aus den Volksbüchereien verbannt werden sollen, da sie niedere Instinkte wachrufen könnten, oder ob man den psychologischen Kriminalroman als die unterste Stufe

auf der Leiter literarischer Bildung einsetzen und benutzen soll.'<sup>55</sup>

In these circumstances, the reluctance of the critics in the late 1950s to treat seriously the detective aspect of Doderer's novel is understandable. For the prejudice is in no way limited to Doderer's novel. An anonymous reviewer of Dürrenmatt's Der Verdacht warns: 'Schon mancher ernsthafter Schriftsteller, der sich in den gefährlichen Strudel der Kriminalistik gewagt hat, ist (literarisch) darin umgekommen.'<sup>56</sup> Dürrenmatt's crime stories have been described as 'by-products',<sup>57</sup> 'potboilers',<sup>58</sup> which are 'of no great quality' from a literary point of view.<sup>59</sup> Dürrenmatt himself implicitly agrees with this widespread prejudice against detective fiction: 'Wie besteht der Künstler in einer Welt der Bildung, der Alphabeten? ... Vielleicht am besten, indem er Kriminalromane schreibt, Kunst da tut, wo niemand sie vermutet.'<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Peter Demetz says of Fontane's attempts in the field of crime (e.g. Unterm Birnbaum, 1885): 'indem er [Fontane] gegen die Substanz seines Talentes handelte, stieg er in artistische Niederungen hinab, die der Freund der Kunst eher meidet als sucht.'<sup>61</sup> As early as 1924, R. Austin Freeman recognized the 'falling off in literary quality of the work of regular novelists when they experiment in this type of fiction, to which they may be adapted neither by temperament nor by training'.<sup>62</sup> Gertrud Fussenegger warns of this very danger in her review of Mord:

Dichter haben es nicht leicht ..., wenn sie sich auf ein so extremes Thema wie einen Mord einlassen. Das crimen ist, zweifellos, ein interessanter Vorwurf, und jeder Erzähler wird sich einmal versucht fühlen, diese äußerste Situation, diese non plus ultra desaströser Verwicklung aufzusuchen. Aber dieses Gelände, auf dem sich obskurente Skribenten so ungeniert tummeln, hat für den seriösen Schriftsteller ungeahnte Tücken. Wenn er nicht gerade ein Dostojewskij oder

Edgar Allan Poe ist, wird er, wenn er sich einmal in die finstere und fatale Sackgasse 'Mord' gewagt hat, zum Schluß noch gern einen Haken schlagen, um den Fußangeln und Schlag-eisen der extremen Thematik zu entkommen ...<sup>63</sup>

For, as Freeman observes, detective fiction is both a 'work of the imagination, demanding the creative, artistic faculty' and a 'work of ratiocination, demanding the power of logical analysis and subtle and acute reasoning', not to mention a 'somewhat extensive outfit of special knowledge'.<sup>64</sup>

Doderer was, of course, acutely aware of the role of specialized knowledge in his novel writing:

Ein Schriftsteller ist nicht Historiker, ein Schriftsteller ist nicht Insektenforscher, ein Schriftsteller ist nicht Schmetterlingsforscher, nicht Krokodilspezialist, sondern er ist ein Schriftsteller und er schafft sich natürlich - und das ist die einzige Rolle, welche die Fachwissenschaften für ihn spielen können und dürfen! - einen Werkzeugkasten an ... Der Schriftsteller muß eine Reiterattacke aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg kavalleristisch richtig beschreiben, der Schriftsteller muß einen Bogenschuß technisch richtig beschreiben, der Schriftsteller muß eine Erzählung aus dem 15. Jahrhundert in der Sprache des 15. Jahrhunderts richtig schreiben. Es ist viel verlangt, aber es wird eben verlangt und dafür ist er ein Schriftsteller!<sup>65</sup>

On the other hand, that Doderer was scarcely conversant with even the most routine matters of crime is revealed in an unpublished diary entry from 1937, in which he lists some of the queries he has not yet resolved when working on Mord:

Auskünfte bei einem höheren Beamten der Ett.Str. [the police

headquarters in Munich] einholen ...

- a) Inwieweit private Verfolgung eines Falles mit der Behörde und dem Gesetze collidiert.
- b) Ob Auskünfte gegeben werden können über einen Fall, dem privaten Aufklärer, amtlich oder privat. (Der sonst seine Kenntnisse nur aus der Zeitung haben könnte.)
- c) Wird ein schwebender Fall überhaupt in die Öffentlichkeit gelassen?<sup>66</sup>

Doderer's insistence on factual accuracy in every detail of his material at the same time reveals more than a passing interest in the subject matter, despite the novelist's repeated insistence on its 'Gleichgültigkeit'.<sup>67</sup> In the same diary entry, Doderer notes: 'Besichtigung (Begehung) eines Tunnels, zum Beispiel desjenigen zwischen Besigheim und Lauffen am Neckar, den ich am vorigen Monate durchfahren habe, auf der Strecke Stuttgart - Heilbronn (also wohl Reichsbahndirektion Stuttgart). Auch hier könnte mir der hiesige Vertreter der RSK die Wege ebnen.'<sup>68</sup> Yet whereas the reviews of Doderer's so-called 'Viennese' novels are frequently characterized by the critics' spontaneous response to the subject matter, few reviewers of Mord share Doderer's obvious interest in the mystery element. The respect shown by Claude Hill for this aspect of Doderer's novel is exceptional: 'Since I do not wish to give away the plot, let me simply say that the solution turns out to be ingenious and convincing. It is not until page 348 that the murderer is named, although a retrospective check reveals that the decisive clue was given early in the book.'<sup>69</sup> In marked contrast to this, the publisher's blurb on the cover of the latest paperback edition of Mord even discloses the name of the 'murderer': 'In Mord erzählt Doderer ... die Lebensgeschichte des Conrad Castiletz, der als Knabe unwissentlich durch einen bösen Streich den Tod eines Mädchens verursacht und bei seinen Bemühungen, den vermeintlichen Raubmord aufzuklären, sich selbst

als Täter entdeckt.'<sup>70</sup>

Admittedly, the critics' disdain for detective fiction is in many ways far from unfounded. Many practitioners seem determined to maintain that crime writing is a 'special branch' of literature. Willard Huntington Wright, for instance, asserts:

The style of a detective story must be direct, simple, smooth and uncumbered. A 'literary' style, replete with descriptive passages, metaphors and word pictures, which might well give viability and beauty to a novel of romance or adventure, would, in a detective yarn, produce sluggishness in the actional current by diverting the reader's mind from the mere record of facts (which is what he is concerned with), and focussing it on irrelevant aesthetic appeals ... No more is gained by stylizing a detective novel than by printing a cross-word puzzle in Garamond Italic, or Cloister Cursive, or the swash characters of Caxton Old-Style.<sup>71</sup>

W. Somerset Maugham agrees: 'Fine writing is here out of place. We do not want a purple passage to distract us ..., nor do we want a description of scenery ... Nor do we want erudition.'<sup>72</sup>

Such attempts to isolate detective fiction from the mainstream of literature have, however, been instrumental in fostering the prejudice in critics whereby works of art which deal with crime and yet also achieve a degree of aesthetic quality are automatically described as 'keine Kriminalromane im üblichen Sinn'.<sup>73</sup> As Colin Watson points out, authors, publishers and reviewers alike fall in with the notion of detective stories being 'in a class quite separate from "legitimate" literature and therefore not subject to the ordinary rules of criticism'.<sup>74</sup> Such fixed preconceptions about the nature and literary value of detective fiction have determined the reception of Doderer's Mord since its first publication. Blinded by misconceptions about the nature



of crime writing, those critics who do not choose merely to ignore the detective element in Mord are content to view the novel as a 'Pseudo-krimi',<sup>75</sup> or a 'Quasi-Krimi mit einer ernsten Aussage'.<sup>76</sup>

#### V The Critical Response to the Detective Element in Doderer's Novel

In recent years, one of the fruits of the 'democratization' of literature which literary sociologists have striven to bring about, has been a growing interest in so-called 'trivial' literature, including detective fiction, on the part of literary scholars and 'serious' writers, and a recognition that such literature is not 'a priori trivial'.<sup>77</sup> Yet those critics who do at least acknowledge the existence of a detective element in Mord either restrict themselves to superficial generalizations or show a distinct lack of awareness of the conventions of detective fiction.

A number of critics do maintain that Mord can be read at least on one level as a detective novel. Henry Furst sees Doderer's novel as a fairly successful attempt to write a 'giallo che abbia anche valore letterario'.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Rolf Flügel describes Mord as a 'Kriminalgeschichte mit dem Ritardando kluger Reflexionen'.<sup>79</sup> Ivar Ivask regards Doderer's work as a 'psychologically complex detective story'.<sup>80</sup> Andrew Barker rather more cautiously asserts that the novel 'turns into something of a detective story'.<sup>81</sup> On the other hand, the reviewer signing himself MPLH assures us that Mord can be read as a thriller 'of the "who done it" order - and an excellent specimen at that'.<sup>82</sup> For Franz-

Peter Haberl it has 'all the suspense of a "whodunit"',<sup>83</sup> and might be characterized as 'partly a "Bildungsroman" and partly a "thriller"'.<sup>84</sup> Harry T. Moore describes Mord as 'another story of the investigator bringing about a resolution that is unexpected',<sup>85</sup> while for Edmund Fuller it builds up 'the suspense of a detective story'.<sup>86</sup> Peter Deane claims that Doderer's novel 'becomes a detective story fraught with symbolic overtones'.<sup>87</sup> Martin Swales complains that the plot 'in its sensationalism is little better than that of a detective novelette',<sup>88</sup> casually revealing the sort of prejudice that has befogged critics of Mord since its appearance in 1938. Christoph Meyer, on the other hand, calls on Doderer to bestow upon modern literature 'den großen Kriminalroman ... , auf den sie schon so lange wartet, trotz Somerset Maugham, Joachim Maaß und Georges Simenon', since both Mord and Die Dämonen reveal Doderer's 'Extraberufung' to this task.<sup>89</sup> Finally, Elisabeth Augustin describes Mord as a 'littéraire detective-roman',<sup>90</sup> in the tradition of Ricarda Huch, Jakob Wassermann, Joachim Maaß, Hans Henny Jahn, Alexander Lernet-Holenia, Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt. The comparison with Dürrenmatt is particularly apt, but, unfortunately, Augustin does not go on to reflect on the significant and undeniable parallels between Doderer's novel and Dürrenmatt's 'anti-detective novels'.

Karl Silex comes closer to an understanding of Doderer's ironic reversal of the traditional features of the crime novel when he writes: 'Es kommt das Dämonische nun gerade dadurch zum Ausdruck, daß bei aller Systematik seiner [Conrads] Detektivleistung es schließlich die unwahrscheinlichen Zufälle und Begegnungen sind, die Konrad [sic] auf die Spur seiner schuldlosen Auslösung des grausigen Geschehens führen ...',<sup>91</sup> Yet unfortunately the negative effects of the critic's acquaintance with Doderer's later works are all too prevalent here, for echoes of Die

Dämonen appear to have predetermined Silex's viewpoint, and his search for 'das Dämonische', which, as we shall see in the next chapter, is characteristic of Doderer's critics after 1956, here prevents him from considering the use of 'Zufall' from a formal or structural point of view in the specific context of the detective novel.

Hans Joachim Schröder, on the other hand, maintains that it was the transparency of the 'Zufalls-Arrangements'<sup>92</sup> that may have led some critics to interpret Mord as 'eine auf Spannung angelegte Kriminalgeschichte'.<sup>93</sup> Although Helmut Qualtinger only recently declared: 'Man müßte eigentlich einen "Doderer-Führer" herausgeben: Doderer zu lesen beginnen sollte man mit dem Mord, das ist ein spannender Krimi',<sup>94</sup> there is little further evidence to support Schröder's claims about the reception of Mord. More importantly, despite the fact that Schröder recognizes that Doderer does not use 'chance' to give the plot of his novel 'eine unterhaltsame Würze',<sup>95</sup> he too fails to relate Doderer's use of chance and coincidence to, or even to acknowledge the existence of the rigid conventions of the traditional detective story. Yet, as Hilde Spiel rightly suggests: 'der Kriminalroman, so sublimiert er auch sei, hat seine eigenen Gesetze.'<sup>96</sup>

## VI The Conventions of the Detective Novel

Before attempting an analysis of Mord as a detective novel, it is necessary to examine the strict conventions of the detective genre, for even the most cursory glance at the theoretical writings on detective

fiction reveals that it is governed by 'laws' as strict as those of the sonnet.<sup>97</sup> Wlodzimierz Bialik says of detective writing: 'Dieses Genre ist literarisch sehr frappant, seine ungeschriebenen Gesetze und Spielregeln sind aber so starr, daß es keine leichte Aufgabe ist, der Konvention auszuweichen und in das Schema etwas Neues einzubringen.'<sup>98</sup> Ironically, these rules were anything but unwritten, which merely emphasizes the rigidity of this genre as a literary form. As early as 1928, G.K. Chesterton described detective fiction as 'one of the few forms of art in which they [the writers] can be guided',<sup>99</sup> 'one of the rare cases in which some rules could be laid down',<sup>100</sup> and advocated the writing of an instruction manual entitled How to Write a Detective Story. In the same year the fixation with rule making reached its logical and preposterous conclusion in S.S. Van Dine's 'Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories',<sup>101</sup> which were followed a year later by Father Ronald A. Knox's 'A Detective Story Decalogue'.<sup>102</sup> Many of these rules are particularly pertinent to Doderer's Mord. Thus Van Dine advises the aspiring author:

...

4. The detective himself, or one of the official investigators, should never turn out to be the culprit. This is bald trickery, on a par with offering some one a bright penny for a five-dollar piece. It's false pretences.

5. The culprit must be determined by logical deductions - not by accident or coincidence or unmotivated confession. To solve a criminal problem in this latter fashion is like sending the reader on a deliberate wild-goose chase, and then telling him, after he has failed, that you had the object of his search up your sleeve all the time. Such an author is no better than a practical joker.

6. The detective novel must have a detective in it; and a

detective is not a detective unless he detects. His function is to gather clues that will eventually lead to a person who did the dirty work in the first chapter; and if the detective does not reach his conclusions through analysis of those clues, he has no more solved his problem than the schoolboy who gets his answer out of the back of the arithmetic.

...

16. A detective novel should contain no long descriptive passages, no literary dallying with side-issues, no subtly worked-out character analyses, no 'atmospheric' preoccupations. Such matters have no vital place in a record of crime and deduction. They hold up the action, and introduce issues irrelevant to the main purpose, which is to state a problem, analyze it, and bring it to a successful conclusion.

...

18. A crime in a detective story must never turn out to be an accident or a suicide. To end an odyssey of sleuthing with such an anti-climax is to hoodwink the trusting and kind-hearted reader. ...<sup>103</sup>

Knox, who states that his rules are not to be understood 'in the sense in which poetry has rules, but ... in the sense in which cricket has rules - a far more impressive consideration to the ordinary Englishman',<sup>104</sup> strikes a similar chord:

...

6. No accident must ever help the detective, nor must he ever have an unaccountable intuition which proves to be right ...

7. The detective himself must never commit the crime. ...<sup>105</sup>

Just how ludicrous such rule-making was, is perhaps best illustrated in the solemn oath sworn by those accepted into the exclusive Detection

Club founded in 1928 by Anthony Berkeley. Potential mystery-mongers were asked to swear:

Do you promise that your detectives shall well and truly detect the crimes presented to them, using those wits which it may please you to bestow upon them and not placing reliance on or making use of Divine Revelation, Feminine Intuition, Mumbo-Jumbo, Jiggery-Pokery, Coincidence or the Act of God? ...

Do you promise to observe a seemly moderation in the use of Gangs, Conspiracies, Death-Rays, Ghosts, Hypnotism, Trap-Doors, Chinamen, Super-Criminals and Lunatics; and utterly and for ever to forswear Mysterious Poisons unknown to Science?<sup>106</sup>

Yet despite the palpable absurdity of such rule-making, this fundamental weakness of detective fiction was actually regarded by many as one of its major strengths. Thus A. E. Murch insists that detective writing 'owes a great debt to Monsignor Ronald A. Knox ... for his many sound examinations of technique'.<sup>107</sup> Haycraft describes minor rules such as 'the familiar prohibitions against secret passages, sinister Orientals, twin brothers from Australia, concealment of information, intuitional solutions, unmotivated confession' and the like, as 'canons of good taste'.<sup>108</sup> Even Bertolt Brecht insists: 'Das Schema ist gesund ... Ein gesundes Schema haben in unserer Zeit außer Operette und Revue von künstlerisch höherstehenden Erzeugnissen vielleicht nur die Kriminalromane'.<sup>109</sup> Elsewhere Brecht maintains: 'Die Tatsache, daß ein Charakteristikum des Kriminalromans in der Variation mehr oder weniger festgelegter Elemente liegt, verleiht dem ganzen Genre sogar das ästhetische Niveau'.<sup>110</sup> Edgar Marsch agrees that the art of the detective story lies in the variation of the limited number of usable elements.<sup>111</sup>

Joseph Wood Krutch suggests:

Perhaps instead of saying that the detective story follows a formula we should say that it has a form, and perhaps we should go on from that to wonder whether this very fact may not be one of the reasons for its popularity at a time [1944] when the novel, always rather loose, so frequently has no shape at all.<sup>112</sup>

Viktor Žmegač, too, argues that the paradox of the detective novel lies in the fact that what most people consider a weakness - its 'schematism' - is in reality one of the major advantages of the genre.<sup>113</sup> Although conceding that every element in the schema is relentlessly pragmatic and has no possibility of developing a life of its own, Žmegač nevertheless insists that the detective novel is characterized by the 'geradezu klassische Geschlossenheit seiner Spielregeln ...., worin er eher an die Mustergebilde der Renaissance- und Barockpoetik erinnert als an eine Hervorbringung der wissenschaftlichen Epoche'.<sup>114</sup> Similarly, Hartmut Kircher maintains that the schema itself does not make any form of literature trivial, as otherwise the sonnet would have to be discounted as 'sub-literary'. Kircher goes on: 'Zudem zeigt die praktizierte Variationsvielfalt, daß das Regelkorsett des Kriminalromans so eng gar nicht ist ...'.<sup>115</sup>

It is, however, difficult to reconcile such idealistic views on the nature of the detective novel schema with a genre in which 'it is not playing fair with the reader to kill your man by passing a Z-ray through a helium plate in such a way as to asphyxiate all tall dark strangers within 14 yards of the instrument ...',<sup>116</sup> or to 'introduce a petty little love story on the unravelling of a mystery is an error of taste for which there is no excuse'.<sup>117</sup> Julian Symons is surely much more convincing when he declares:

It seems surprising that the intelligent men and women who

devised the rules did not see that they were limiting the scope and interest of their work. The puzzle of Who and Why and How remains a vital element in most crime fiction, but to abjure voluntarily the interplay of character and the force of passion was eventually to reduce this kind of detective story to the level of the crossword puzzle, which can be solved but not read ...<sup>118</sup>

Far from producing a genre in which the art of the practitioner is manifested in the technique of variation, the mechanical adherence to a fixed schema merely led to an ossification of the form. It is an inherent weakness of all 'Variationsgattungen' that, once a system of strict conventions has been established, this often leads to a rigid conservatism which stubbornly refuses to accommodate changes in structure or contents. All too easily the literary genre is reduced to a game played for its own sake according to a set of rigid, but artificial rules. So inflexible is the straitjacket of convention that Ernst Kaemmel is right when he asserts: 'hier [kann] absolut handwerkmäßig, mit handwerklichen Regeln gearbeitet werden ... In der Tat handelt es sich um eine echte Handwerkelei in der Kunst der Unterhaltung. Wenn die handwerklichen Regeln Beachtung gefunden haben, so kann die Arbeit selbst literarisch schlampig und dürftig und voll von Effekthascherei sein, sie wird ihre Wirkung nicht verfehlen.'<sup>119</sup> There can be little doubt that A.G. MacDonell is justified in his claim that not only the number of characters, the appearance and age of the victim, but even the number of pages in the classical detective novel are 'predetermined' by the requirements of the conventions.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, one further major weakness of the detective novel lies in the fact that, as Raymond Chandler points out, whereas the good novel is evidently not at all the same kind of book as the bad novel, the good and the bad detective story 'are about exactly the same things, and they are about them in very much the same



way'.<sup>121</sup> In the circumstances, the general academic prejudice against the detective novel might appear justified on aesthetic grounds, for crime fiction is more easily identifiable with and is most often judged by its failures. Hampered by long-standing artificial conventions which are not determined by the material or by the general exigencies of narrative writing, the classical detective story has developed into a self-existent literary genre characterized by the rigidity of its schema. The self-imposed restrictions have succeeded only in limiting the scope for aesthetic expression in the works. If the classical detective story never achieves the epic breadth of conventional novels, it is because any realistic complications are peremptorily rejected as distractions from the central theme, the solution of the crime.

A. G. MacDonell succinctly sums up the role of the conventions of the detective story:

...that is the whole story of the problem detective-novel, from page one to page 283. At no point is the author a free man. He is hampered and hindered by the exigencies of the book. From beginning to end his style is cramped, his material dictated, his character-drawing prevented, and the number of his pages laid down in advance. Indeed, to be quite candid, it is not the sort of book that ought to be undertaken by Mr J. B. Priestley.<sup>122</sup>

It is, however, a field of literature into which Herr Heimito von Doderer dared to venture.

That Doderer's Mord was written at the height of the so-called 'Golden Age' of detective fiction was surely no mere coincidence. To what extent the author was consciously aware of the actual written conventions of detective fiction is a matter for sheer speculation, but it is ultimately of little relevance, since there is considerable evidence

to suggest that Doderer was well aware of more than a few practical manifestations of these rules. In his published diaries, Doderer explicitly reflects on the occasions when he had been an avid reader of English detective stories:

Mein Wohnen mit Albrecht Reif (meinem Erzieher) in Koller's  
'Gasthof zum oberen Eggl' in Prein an der Rax: unsre abend-  
liche Lektüre von englischen Kriminalromanen.<sup>123</sup>

Englische Kriminal-Romane am Riegelhof.<sup>124</sup>

Furthermore, Helmut Qualtinger declares that Doderer claimed that The Hound of the Baskervilles was one of the greatest novels of this century,<sup>125</sup> and Doderer's sister, Frau Astrid von Stummer-Doderer, assures that he often spoke with great admiration of Conan Doyle, and insisted that Doyle's achievements as a writer of detective stories were never equalled.<sup>126</sup> Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the rather unusual name Castiletz bears such a striking resemblance to Noël Vindry's 'Commissaire Castelet' that it is difficult to disengage oneself from the thought that Doderer's detective might not be a deliberate parody of the hero of Vindry's ingenious but arid and artificial 'whodunits', which were popular in the 1930s.<sup>127</sup>

There is, then, every evidence to suggest that the detective element in Mord is the product of a fairly sound knowledge of the form and conventions of the detective novel, rather than merely an 'irrelevant' backdrop against which the tortuous process of Castiletz's 'Menschwerdung' takes place.

Eine Leiche wird gefunden. Die Umstände erlauben keine andere Diagnose als Mord. Aber wer ist der Täter? Das ist die Frage, die alle Gemüter beschäftigt und beängstigt, die aber nicht beantwortet wird, bis das Ende der Erzählung erreicht ist. Die Frage wird dringlicher, nachdem ein zweiter Mord geschehen ist, ein dritter. Die Fahndung wird fieberhaft. Spuren werden gefunden, verfolgt und wieder verloren. Hypothesen werden aufgestellt und umgestoßen. Aber langsam schälen sich einige gesicherte Tatbestände heraus. Ihre richtige Deutung und Verknüpfung ergibt die Antwort auf die stumme Frage, die die Leiche gestellt hat, die Rekonstruktion des Hergangs und die Ermittlung des Täters.<sup>128</sup>

Few would dispute the accuracy of Richard Alewyn's paradigmatic 'model' of the detective novel, although many regard the second and third murders as 'optional extras'. Indeed part of the 'Richtlinien zur Selbstkontrolle' established by Austrian publishers of crime fiction in the early 1950s was the stipulation that 'in jedem Roman nur ein Mord und keine besonderen Grausamkeiten vorkommen dürfen ...'<sup>129</sup>

Seen from the viewpoint of Alewyn's definition, Doderer's Mord clearly does not comply with the familiar pattern. Moreover, Ernst Bloch insists that in the classical detective story what has happened before the murder 'wird ... in keiner Vorhandlung dargestellt, eben weil es überhaupt noch nicht darstellbar ist, außer durch Ausgrabungen, durch Indizien, welche rekonstruieren lassen'.<sup>130</sup> In Doderer's novel, in sharp contrast to the conventional model, it is not until chapter 23 that Castiletz, fired by a romantic fascination for the case of Louison Veik, begins to make inquiries, and only in chapter 33 does our 'detective' become actively involved in the case. Ulrich Suerbaum maintains:

'Unmittelbar nach dem Mord erstarrt zusammen mit dem jäh Verblichenen die ganze Romanwelt ... Ein neuer Handlungsstrang, der nicht mit dem Mord in Verbindung steht, kann nicht abgerollt werden; er würde nur ableiten und stören ...',<sup>131</sup> Here again Doderer's novel is evidently out of line with the established pattern.

Yet the mere fact that Mord obviously cannot be regarded as a conventional detective novel does not account for or justify the presence of the crime element which the critics are all too eager to ignore or dismiss as mere 'padding'. As we have already seen, despite Doderer's insistence on the 'irrelevancy' of the subject matter of his novels, the author went to great lengths to establish or confirm the accuracy of the factual details he used, a process which Doderer himself described as 'zolaisieren'.<sup>132</sup> Most critics of Mord have blindly accepted Doderer's postulation of the absolute primacy of form over content in his work without reflecting on the fact that the subject matter, too, is an integral part of the aesthetic structure. What critics of Mord have hitherto failed to consider is that, however subsidiary a role the crime element might play in Doderer's novel, it is there for a purpose, for, as Ruth Tilliger wisely observes, there was nothing accidental or incidental in the author's artistic production.<sup>133</sup>

#### A: Castiletz as a Detective

In an unpublished diary Doderer explicitly refers to Castiletz as an 'amateur detective', but of a very special kind, '[ein] vom idolischen Eros beflügelter, ja geradezu französischer Amateur-Detektiv'.<sup>134</sup> In the novel itself it is in a totally irrational spirit of romantic

adventure that Conrad approaches the case of Louison Veik: 'Die Szene hier war nicht ohne Romantik; sie hätte in einem der Detektivromane vorkommen können, die er vorzeiten ab und zu einmal gelesen hatte.'<sup>135</sup>

Even as a child at play, Castiletz reveals a remarkable capacity for logical thinking, which might at first blush appear to be the ideal prerequisite for a budding amateur detective:

Sein Vater, der kein schlechter Beobachter war, kam einmal - die auf den ersten Augenschein hin stets gleiche und doch allmählich gegenüber der Festung sich von Tag zu Tag verändernde Aufstellung der Armee bemerkend - durch vorsichtiges Fragen dahinter, daß des Söhnchens Spiele Zusammenhänge bis über acht Tage aufwiesen, die man eigentlich als durchaus logische bezeichnen konnte.(pp.10-11)

However, Castiletz is also consistently characterized by a certain mental sluggishness which is hardly the hallmark of an amateur sleuth:

Es erscheint bemerkenswert, daß Conrad von diesem geldlichen Hintergrunde der Forschung in den Tümpeln und des vielen Herumsteigens und Herumfischens darin erst viel später zufällige Kenntnis erhielt, als er beinahe schon erwachsen war. (p.15)

Und jetzt erst kam Kokosch auf eine sehr einfache Erklärung dieses letzten Umstandes: seine Eltern hatten während des Sommers das Vorzimmer neu streichen lassen. (p.36)

Conrad bemerkte jetzt erst, daß der Geruch von Lack, den er schon die ganze Zeit hindurch - und nicht unangenehm - empfunden hatte, von den frisch gemalten Verzierungen oben an den Pfosten und an der Stirnseite dieser Laube hier kam. (p.80)

In sharp contradistinction to Castiletz, the 'great detective' of classical detective fiction, from Poe's Dupin to Conan Doyle's Holmes or Agatha Christies's Poirot, is the 'Fairy Godmother of twentieth century

folk-myth, his magic capabilities only modified to the requirements of a would-be scientific and rational generation'.<sup>136</sup> He is the personification of the superiority of the ratio and the infallibility of scientific positivism, a final remnant of security and order in a society in which the steadily rising number of unsolved crimes has undermined the individual's confidence in the institutionalized upholders of the law. In this world of uncertainty, the master detective is a pillar of stability, an idealized superman who has long since been mythologized. Invariably victorious, inevitably omniscient, the great detective is almost godlike.

If any figure in Doderer's Mord resembles the omnipotent detective from 221B Baker Street, who is so often ironically alluded to in the novel (pp.207, 214, 220, 260, 325, 350), it is not Castiletz, but Hohenlocher. For the aloof, eccentric 'Jagdhund' - a literal translation of the English 'sleuth' - 'im seidenen Hausanzug mit einer Schnur um die Mitte' (p.122) is clearly reminiscent of the 'pure-blooded, well-trained foxhound',<sup>137</sup> the 'amateur bloodhound',<sup>138</sup> whom we so often find 'lounging upon the sofa in a purple dressing-gown'.<sup>139</sup> Even Hohenlocher's eccentric method of practising shooting is a clear allusion to Sherlock Holmes and further undeniable evidence of Doderer's familiarity with the detective story tradition, for Doyle's Watson asserts:

I have always held, too, that pistol practice should be distinctly an open-air pastime; and when Holmes, in one of his queer humours, would sit in an armchair with his hair-trigger and a hundred Boxer cartridges and proceed to adorn the opposite wall with a patriotic V. R. done in bullet pocks, I felt strongly that neither the atmosphere nor the appearance of our room was improved by it.<sup>140</sup>

Castiletz, on the other hand, scarcely exhibits the mental alacrity

expected of an amateur detective, when he asks Inkrat: 'Hat man keine Fingerabdrücke in dem Abteil der Ermordeten feststellen können?' (p.211). Inkrat's reply has more than a hint of irony, which merely underlines Conrad's naivety: 'Die Verbrecherwelt ist dem Fortschritte, welchen die Daktyloskopie einst für die Kriminalistik darstellte, längst nachgekommen, zumindest die große Verbrecherwelt; in dieser trägt man bei solchen Anlässen Handschuhe' (p.211). Yet despite his father-in-law's warning: 'Nein, lieber Koko ... das ist aussichtslos. Hier ist gar nichts mehr zu tun. Es gibt Fälle, angesichts derer die Vernunft abzutreten hat' (p.182), Castiletz is convinced that he has the perspicacity to succeed where the police have failed:

Blitzschnell durchkreuzte sein Hirn der Gedanke, daß dieser Doktor Inkrat vielleicht ein vortrefflicher Theoretiker sein konnte, schwerlich aber in der Praxis ein solcher Kriminalist, wie ihn der Fall Louison Veik eben erfordert hätte, wobei es auf die Fähigkeit, mehr oder weniger klug zu reden, verdammt wenig angekommen war. Nun, und er, Castiletz, mußte heute deshalb vor einer Mauer ohne Tor umherirren. (p.234)

Castiletz's neurotic obsession with order admittedly does inspire in him a thoroughness akin to that of the detective: '"Ich studierte den Stadtplan auf der Reise theoretisch und heute vormittags mit praktischen Übungen", sagte Castiletz völlig ernsthaft' (p.116). And he sets about his investigation in an equally pedantic manner, making notes in his 'blaues Heft in Quarto' (p.237). Yet throughout the course of Conrad's inquiries there is a clear dichotomy between the results of his conscious attempts at detection and those of investigations inspired by inexplicable premonitions or sheer luck.

Just as Castiletz's initial interest in the case of Louison Veik is aroused when he happens to marry into the dead girl's family, it is an

equally fortuitous coincidence that Inkrat, who has been involved in the original murder inquiry, should have been transferred to the town where Castiletz now lives and works. For Conrad is thus in the fortunate position of being able to obtain first-hand information from an invaluable and otherwise inaccessible source. However, it is only in Castiletz's first major breakthrough that the true nature of his success becomes evident. In spontaneous response to an inexplicable impulse, Castiletz 'fanatically' (p.254) leaves the train in which he has been travelling. As he enters the tunnel, Conrad himself is struck by the thought that what he is doing is not the result of any rational plan: 'In diesen Augenblicken erst durchblitzte es ihn, daß er hastig hierhergekommen war, ohne eine geleistete Vorarbeit des Denkens, ja ... ohne eigentlich genau zu wissen, was er hier nun suchen wollte ... Wie ein Trichter, in welchem die ganze Unternehmung bereits versinken wollte, öffnete sich die Erkenntnis, daß keineswegs vernünftige Überlegung ihn gerade hierher geführt hatte' (p.261). And as he asks himself whether he should follow the right or the left side of the wall, Castiletz is again guided by some incomprehensible instinct: 'Eine Art unkontrollierbarer Muskelbeschluß antwortete aus Conrad auf diese Frage, keine Erwägung' (p.261). And yet, despite the apparent senselessness of his search - 'zwischen diesen vielen rußigen Steinen und ihren zahllosen Zwischenräumen irgendwelche kleine Gegenstände zu finden, die heute, nach über acht Jahren, mindestens so sehr vom Rauche überzogen sein mußten wie eben alles hier ... dies war unmöglich, zumindest in Gehetztheit und Eile. Hier brauchte man vor allem eine Erlaubnis und Bewilligung, und eine zweite und stärkere Lampe und eine Begleitung' (pp.261-262) - Castiletz succeeds in finding not only a piece of jewellery, but one which he immediately recognizes as belonging to Louison, since Marianne - coincidentally - has a pair of ear-rings identical to the one which he has found. Although



Hermann Lenz claims that Conrad follows up every thread 'mit kriminalistisch geschärftem Scharfsinn',<sup>141</sup> it is clear that Castiletz's success is the result of an amazing, and highly implausible stroke of good fortune rather than of genius, a fact which Castiletz himself acknowledges: 'Das mit dem Ohrring ist einer von jenen glorreichen Zufällen, durch die oft Verbrechen ans Licht kamen' (p.270).

Having been favoured in such an extraordinary way by apparently benevolent irrational forces, Conrad is now in possession of a plethora of clues, yet, far from applying his powers of ratiocination to them in the manner of the great detective, Castiletz can make absolutely nothing of them. Even when he luckily stumbles upon the wine tavern with its out-of-place concert grand, Conrad is unable to think coherently and to arrive at the obvious conclusions:

Bei alledem war ihm eigentlich angst und bang, und zwar in einer seltsam hellsichtigen Weise; durch Augenblicke kam es ihm ernstlich bei, die Sachen hier als irgendeine verspätet zum Ausbruch gekommene Unordnung aus seinem eigenen früheren Leben zu sehen ... aber wie?

Im nächsten Atemzuge schon verstand er diesen Gedanken nicht mehr. Wohl aber einen anderen (den er als sozusagen allzu einfach verwarf, hier konnte ja nicht ein Fund den zweiten jagen, nein, dies wäre gewissermaßen zu 'hell' - 'ich bin betrunken!') - und dieser andere Gedanke stellte eine billige Verbindung her zwischen glücklichen Findern verstreuter Kostbarkeiten und einer Tochter, für deren Ferientage man sich einen Konzertflügel leistete. Ja, Töchter spielen eben mitunter die Mondscheinsonate ... (p.265)

Blinded by preconceived notions of Peitz's guilt, our 'detective' is not only unable to recognize his own role in the 'murder' of Louison Veik, for which there is clearly ample evidence; Castiletz is even unwilling

to accept the obvious link between the grand piano and the jewels, a clue no self-respecting investigator could overlook. Nevertheless, Conrad is suspicious of his own *modus operandi*, since it in no way corresponds with the technique of the master detective: 'Seltsam genug: nicht einmal der doch außer Zweifel stehende Fund des Ohrringes rechtfertigte jetzt für Castiletz die Art, wie er hierher gekommen war, nämlich in einer sozusagen zufälligen Weise (ja, konnte er denn, bei geordneter Beschäftigung mit dem ganzen Falle, eine solche, wieder viel zu "dunkle", überhastete Art des Vorgehens dulden?)' (p.268).

When Castiletz then becomes acquainted with the station-master - 'zufällig' (p.271), of course - he determines, despite his conviction that there is little chance of finding anything in the tunnel now (p.270), to search the tunnel accompanied by a trackwalker. It does not perturb Castiletz that this organized search brings nothing more to light: 'Daß er nichts fand, machte ihm jedoch überhaupt nichts aus. Dieser Gang war sozusagen nur eine Form- und Ordnungssache: wegen des blauen Heftes in Quarto' (p.273). Having gone through the motions of being a genuine detective, Conrad has satisfied his desire for 'order': 'Frühzeitig ging Castiletz heute zu Tisch, durchaus mit dem Gefühl, verrichtete Sachen hinter sich zu haben' (p.275). Our detective shows little inclination to dwell on the fact that his success has apparently come about through the benevolent intervention of agencies beyond his control.

Further evidence of Conrad's inability to combine obvious clues is provided when his aunt Erika confirms his suspicion that he was travelling on the same train as Louison the night she died. Although he is curiously 'moved', indeed 'erschüttert' (p.279) by what his aunt has to say, our would-be investigator is unable or unwilling to draw the unavoidable conclusion.

It is yet another fortuitous coincidence that allows Castiletz to

go to Berlin as he had intended (pp.269-270), without having to explain to Marianne the real reason for his visit. In Berlin, too, Conrad remains in the 'Flußbett der fördernden Zufälle' (p.332). For his boyhood friend Günther Ligharts not only recognizes Peitz's name, but is even able to imitate him perfectly, and also shares Conrad's dislike of the man, although he has no dealings with him: '"Getan?" antwortete Quiek. "Wieso getan? Gar nichts getan. Niemals. Wir haben ja keinen Umgang mit ihm. Aber wir mögen ihn nicht."' (p.306). Gradually, even Castiletz begins to realize that he himself is apparently not in control of his investigations: 'Castiletz ... wurde geradezu ereilt oder eingeholt von jener Verfassung, die er schon von Stuttgart her kannte (anlässlich seines Besuches bei der Rosanka): auch hier schien jetzt alles ohne Mühe in die Geleise zu fallen, schnappten die Scharniere von selbst ein' (pp.307-308).

Despite the fact that all his premeditated efforts to solve the curious case of Louison Veik have met with virtually no success, Castiletz now has a clear aim in mind: 'er mußte es dahin bringen, gewissermaßen eine leichtere Hand zu bekommen in dieser Sache mit Henry Peitz, glücklichen Zufällen das Ihre zu überlassen, sich wirklich wie zu seinem Vergnügen damit zu beschäftigen' (p.310). Far from being the 'Inkarnation der Ratio',<sup>142</sup> our detective can do little more than trust to luck: 'Was bei ihm indessen bereits verfiel, das war ein Glaube an die Möglichkeit glücklicher Zufälle, wie in Stuttgart, ja, eigentlich vielmehr noch zu Lauffen am Neckar ...' (p.317).

Like Castiletz, Schlaggenberg in Die Dämonen also believes that only the fortuitous coincidences which life itself contrives to offer can help him to realize his plans, but Schlaggenberg pursues his aims 'mit vernünftigen, wohlüberlegten Mitteln'<sup>143</sup>: 'Man muß nur eine möglichst große Fläche bieten, auf welcher ein glücklicher Zufall dann

auftreffen kann.'<sup>144</sup> Using arguments familiar from Doderer's theoretical writings, Geyrenhoff warns Schlaggenberg of the dangers of such an approach to life:

Was Sie da von der 'möglichst großen Fläche' sagen, Kajetan, ... das klingt sehr bestechend, ist aber, wie ich glaube, falsch, weil zu mathematisch. Das riecht ja schon geradezu nach Wahrscheinlichkeitsrechnung. Im Leben für ein Ereignis bereit sein, welches man am Ende durch diese ständige Bereitschaft sozusagen herbeiführt, ja herbeizieht, das sieht, wie ich glaube, anders aus. Man weiß wohl auch weniger davon. Sie aber, mein Lieber, Sie stellen dem Leben sozusagen Fallen (oder Sie wollen das wenigstens tun) wie die Schildbürger dem Licht. Sie wollen es mit Ihren Netzen fangen, aber ich fürchte, es wird sich vor solchen Methoden zurückziehen.<sup>145</sup>

Unrepentant, Schlaggenberg is determined to persevere in his methodical approach: 'Jedenfalls werde ich glücklichen Zufällen systematisch die Türen öffnen, so weit es nur geht.'<sup>146</sup> It goes almost without saying that the meeting with a fat female which Schlaggenberg is consciously endeavouring to provoke, is the very opposite of a truly 'chance' meeting, which cannot be rationally induced, but simply happens. That Schlaggenberg's conscious, programmatic attempts to mould life to his own designs end in total failure, corresponds, of course, with Doderer's conception of the 'wichtigste Entdeckung in der Mechanik sowohl des Geistes als auch des äußeren Geschehens ...: die des indirekten Weges; die des lebensgemäßen Denkens, sehr zum Unterschiede von den immer erneut rundum praktizierten Versuchen, denkensgemäß zu leben, die allesamt verurteilt waren, im Doktrinarismus, im Reformertum und schließlich im totalen Staate zu enden'.<sup>147</sup>

It is equally evident that the mysterious, yet persistent good fortune which accompanies Castiletz's 'detective work' has its roots in Doderer's ideology of the essential 'indirectness' of life, according to

which the ideal attitude is one of passive receptivity towards whatever life has to offer. Thus Conrad's finding the ear-ring in the tunnel is a clear reflection of Doderer's idiosyncratic conception of the nature of the artistic process itself: 'das ineinander gesunkene und verschobene Gemäuer in der braunen Tiefe der Jahre dort unten ist ihm [dem Schriftsteller] kein Steinbruch, wo er hingeht, Baustoff zu holen. Sondern von selbst wird plötzlich ein Teil aufleuchten wie von innen erhellter Smaragd, grünglühend, und jedesmal wird dieser Teil als ein Eckstein erkannt werden, der verworfen war.'<sup>148</sup> And Doderer's belief in the 'evidente Irrationalität des Lebens',<sup>149</sup> so diametrically opposed to the conventional detective story writer's unbending faith in the ability of the human mind to make sense of apparantly irrational phenomena, is the key to a proper understanding of the author's intergration of a 'detective element' into Mord.

Since Castiletz's attitude towards the benevolent 'Zufälle' is one of 'innere Bereitschaft',<sup>150</sup> as opposed to Schlaggenberg's 'innerlich verbissene Haltung',<sup>151</sup> the seemingly endless flow of fortunate accidents and coincidences does not cease: 'Hier wurde Conrad von einem, wie ihm schien, außerordentlich günstigen Umstande angenehm überrascht' (p.322). Castiletz is lucky enough to observe how, on the very first occasion he has followed Peitz, the latter appears to be attempting to sell jewelry: 'Wie zu Stuttgart und Lauffen fühlte er sich auch jetzt wieder in einer bestimmten Rinne befangen, welche das Leben da unsichtbar bildete: in dieser Bahn aber lief alles unentrinnbar, von sogenannten Zufällen wie von festen und dichten Wänden geleitet' (p.324). Whereas the traditional detective is an 'Apostle of Reason and Science',<sup>152</sup> Conrad continues to rely on lucky accidents. He is living in 'einem Zustand, darin die herbeieilenden und glücklich hinzugegebenen Zufälle geradezu ein tägliches Gleis bedeuten ..., eine sich öffnende Weiche gleichsam, in

die man oft und immer wieder glitt ...'<sup>153</sup>

Characteristically, Conrad's next consciously planned attempt at playing the detective - by 'shadowing' Peitz - ends in failure and frustration:

So schien alles zu stehen, oder sich auf der Stelle zu drehen, und man war offensichtlich aus dem Flußbett der fördernden Zufälle irgendwie herausgeraten. Conrad mußte sich wieder an die Tage zu Lauffen erinnern, wo der erste, gleichsam Hals über Kopf getane Vorstoß den großen Erfolg in Gestalt jenes Fundes im Tunnel gebracht, die bedachtsame und vorsätzliche Begehung desselben dann aber nicht das geringste mehr zutage gefördert hatte. (p.332)

And it is once again a chance meeting with Peitz, rather than a premeditated course of action, that finally leads Conrad to discover the truth about Peitz's innocence. Ingrid Ryan points out that it is not so much the phenomenon of 'Zufall' per se that interests Doderer, 'sondern der Zufall an der Schwelle der Person: Gewährt sie dem "Zufall" Eintritt oder nicht?',<sup>154</sup> Castiletz again reveals the receptivity towards the gifts offered by life that Doderer demands of his characters: 'Jedoch, zugleich mit dem augenblicklichen und unanfechtbaren Entschlusse, Peitz zu folgen - eine Verpflichtung! - erhob sich in ihm eine Art Gewißheit, daß es nun, nach solchem zufälligen Treffen, zu irgendeiner Entscheidung kommen mußte' (pp.335-336). Conrad's irrational faith in chance, so uncharacteristic of a detective, is justly rewarded, for Peitz meets none other than Castiletz's boyhood tutor, Albert Lehnder (p.336). The latter points the way to a correct interpretation of the 'Zufallskonstellation' in Mord: 'Erfreulich jedenfalls, daß wir uns bei diesem Anlasse so zufällig getroffen haben. Seit Tagen stand dein Name bei mir auf dem Block. Es gibt Dinge, die sich von selbst erledigen' (p.339). Castiletz

does 'everything possible by way of logical deduction and planning to shed light upon the mystery, but it is all to no avail'.<sup>155</sup> It is as if the case is solved in spite of rather than because of Conrad's inquiries. Yet another chance meeting, this time with Botulitzky, who in turn 'happens' to have seen Castiletz not once, but three times (p.341) and even to have driven him to Pankow on more than one occasion (p.351), results in Conrad's finally arriving at the truth about his own involvement in the 'murder' of Louison Veik.

#### B: The Critical Response to Doderer's Use of 'Zufall'

Although the reviewer signing himself -fli- considers the construction of Mord so splendidly planned and carried out that one never questions the plausibility of the plot,<sup>156</sup> and Claude Hill describes the solution as 'ingenious and convincing',<sup>157</sup> most reviewers are far more critical of Doderer's employment of chance and coincidence in Mord.

In an article signed B.A., the writer complains that the plot is unconvincing,<sup>158</sup> while the reviewer signing himself F.H. maintains that the murder story is no doubt original and surprising 'aber doch konstruiert'.<sup>159</sup> The reviewer signing himself L.B. is equally critical of the 'strange coincidences',<sup>160</sup> and even the Doderer devotee Hans Flesch-Brunningen acknowledges that the 'so-called plot' is clearly constructed 'wenn auch nicht ohne haarsträubende Unwahrscheinlichkeiten durchgeführt'.<sup>161</sup> Dieter Johannsen states that the so-called coincidences in the novel verge on the incredible.<sup>162</sup> Morris Gilbert claims that the solution 'revolves around ... a sequence of utterly incredible coincidences',<sup>163</sup> while Peter Deane takes umbrage at the 'laborious series of

coincidences'.<sup>164</sup> The Garlands declare that 'connoisseurs of detective fiction will discover implausibilities.'<sup>165</sup> Peter Huys maintains that the novel is 'zwak geconstrueerd', 'eindigend als een detectieverhaal met een zeer onwaarschijnlijke ontknoping.'<sup>166</sup> Hilde Spiel, too, concedes: 'Zur Enthüllung des Mörders wird allzu skrupellos bemüht, was englische Kritiker "the long arm of coincidence" nennen. Zumindest auf der vordergründigsten Ebene, die gleichwohl "stimmen" muß, auch wenn sie nur den Anlaß zu symbolischer Deutung darstellt, scheint die Lösung erzwungen.'<sup>167</sup> And the accumulation of coincidences in Mord leads Sarah Gainham to conclude that the theme of the novel is 'the idiot chanciness of life'.<sup>168</sup>

Academic critics, too, have been quick to point out the implausibilities in Mord. Martin Swales, for instance, asserts: 'Das Werk ist voll von unwahrscheinlichen Ereignissen und Zufällen, und ein anscheinend unerklärlicher Mord steigert die geheimnisvolle Stimmung. Doderer versucht keineswegs, die Zufälle, von denen die Handlung abhängt, zu verhüllen.'<sup>169</sup> As for Conrad's finding the ear-ring in the tunnel, Swales observes: 'Solch ein Zufall wäre selbst in einem Kriminalroman fragwürdig, geschweige denn in einem ernst zu nehmenden Roman.'<sup>170</sup> Hans Joachim Schröder also questions the plausibility of this incident: 'Die Wirkung der Indirektheit wird, wie sich zeigt, vom Autor sehr direkt und auf eine wenig glaubwürdige Weise manipuliert.'<sup>171</sup> For Schröder, even the accident in which Louison Veik dies, comes about 'auf eine höchst unwahrscheinliche, zufällige Weise'.<sup>172</sup> It is worth mentioning, however, that the 'murder' method is certainly no less plausible than in the average detective story, in which the 'common reader has to make a considerable surrender of the sense of what is real and fitting before he can treat the death of a human being as an intellectual rather than an emotional affair',<sup>173</sup> and which is usually set in the narrow zone in



which possibility and improbability converge, where things happen which are on the one hand highly unlikely but on the other are just within the bounds of possibility. Indeed, one of the main characteristics of the detective story is the tendency to come up with cases far more complicated and improbable than any found in the annals of the police.

On the other hand, that Doderer was conscious of the dangers inherent in the accumulation of implausible coincidences in Mord is revealed in an unpublished diary entry from May 1937, where he reflects on the meeting between Conrad and Botulitzky in Berlin:

Es erhebt sich nun das Bedürfnis, Med. [= Mediziner, i.e. Botulitzky] nicht als einschliessenden 'Zufall' in IV., sondern durch längere Verkettungen des Lebens, etwa über dritte und vierte Personen, an Conrad C. heranzuführen. Nie würde jedoch ein solches Verfahren - so wende ich dagegen ein! - sich dem Geschmacke des Zufälligen ganz entwinden können ... Gelingt es jedoch, Conrad C. in IV. so weit zu bringen, daß eine Erscheinung wie Med. gleichsam aus seinem Innern nach außen gedrungen und geradezu postuliert wirkt (innerer Reifepunkt), so behält die Erscheinung ihre ganze Dämonie, und wird am allerwenigsten 'zufällig' auftreten.<sup>174</sup>

But Doderer's intention to emphasize the 'demonic' aspect from Castiletz's point of view of the sudden appearance of Botulitzky is not realized in the novel, and the reader is left with the impression that yet another incredible coincidence has smoothed the way for our 'detective'.

Yet, in a coincidence far more unlikely than anything which happens in Mord, on the very day of the original publication of the novel, a house in Düsseldorf was destroyed in a gas explosion caused in the same complicated way as the explosion at the end of Mord. Doderer took this as a proof positive that even the most improbable coincidences in his novel were justified: 'das Pressefoto, welches damals durch die Blätter

lief, zeigte einfach des Romanes Schlußbild, auf dem auch ein Rettungsmann nicht fehlte, der dort vorkommt. Der Verfasser buchte das allen Ernstes als Erfolg und hielt sein Werk auch in jenen erfundenen Teilen für verifiziert, für deren Lebensgemäßheit kein so handfester Erweis gebracht war wie für das Schlußkapitel.<sup>175</sup> In a diary entry from 1938, Doderer notes with some satisfaction: 'Ein Zolaist muß wohl zufrieden sein, wenn ihm gelingt, das Leben zu überholen.'<sup>176</sup>

Nevertheless, there is no denying the fundamental irrationality of Doderer's conception of 'Zufall', and it is this irrationality that meets with the disapproval of Hans Joachim Schröder. Doderer's attempt to fortify the basis of his idea of 'Zufall' by referring to the works of Wilhelm von Scholz<sup>177</sup> is dismissed by Schröder as merely an attempt to give the whole theory an air of rationality, while Scholz himself is rejected by Schröder as 'bei aller scheinbaren Sachlichkeit seiner Ausführungen ein gefühlsbetonter Irrationalist'.<sup>178</sup> Yet although Schröder is intent on establishing a link between the irrationality of Doderer's thinking and that of the Nazi ideology, he neglects to consider Doderer's novel in the light of classical detective fiction theory and the attitude of the Nazis towards this form of literature.

Anton Reininger, on the other hand, recognizes that the detective element in Mord appears to demonstrate not only 'das Walten des Zufalls',<sup>179</sup> but the 'Ohnmacht des Verstandes',<sup>180</sup> and this is the key to a possible re-interpretation of the detective aspect of the novel. But what Reininger, like the other critics and reviewers of Mord, fails to realize is that Doderer uses the form of the detective novel to express a view of life which is fundamentally alien to it, a philosophy which is diametrically opposed to that of the conventional detective story writer.

### VIII Doderer's Novel as an Anti-Detective Story

Dietrich Weber asserts: 'Bezeichnenderweise ist der Fall Louison Veik durch direkte kriminalistische Bemühungen nicht aufgeklärt worden; das ist nebenbei der schlagende Erweis, daß es sich hier gar nicht um einen Kriminalfall handelt, und daß demzufolge ebensowenig das Werk ein Kriminalroman zu nennen ist, wie eine oberflächliche Betrachtung zunächst vermeinen könnte.'<sup>181</sup> Yet what neither Weber nor any other critic of Mord has considered hitherto is that Doderer's consistent portrayal of the impotence of reason in his would-be private detective could be interpreted as making the novel nothing less than an 'anti-detective story', a viewpoint which at least offers the advantage of not having to deny the existence of the detective element in Mord. Before developing this hypothesis, it is necessary to examine the historical roots of the classical detective novel and Doderer's attitude towards the era in which it was born.

Richard Alewyn argues that the seeds of the classical detective novel are to be found in German Romanticism: 'Es ist ein Kind nicht des Rationalismus und des Realismus, sondern der Romantik.'<sup>182</sup> For Alewyn, the fact that the reader is confused and misled by the introduction of totally innocent characters towards whose guilt all the evidence appears to point, reveals a scepticism towards the structure of the world as we know it, a lack of faith in the ability of man's empirical senses to perceive the truth, and is thus a crushing indictment of the reliability of circumstantial evidence. Far from inspiring confidence in reason and science, Alewyn concludes, the detective story undermines our faith in man's ability to solve problems by applying the powers of ratiocination and the methods of modern science.<sup>183</sup> Yet Alewyn's argument is scarcely

convincing, for the reader's confidence in the omnipotence of the ratio is undermined only superficially and temporarily, since the predictability of the ending is an indispensable part of the rigid schema. The classical detective is in fact the very antithesis of the romantic artist. As Richard Gerber points out: 'Hoffmann beginnt mit der banalen Oberfläche und findet dahinter das Wunder. Dem Detektiv dagegen wird zuerst ein Wunder vorgelegt, der Detektiv schnüffelt mißtrauisch daran herum, denn wenn es etwas gibt, woran er nicht glaubt, dann ist es das Wunder.'<sup>184</sup>

The very basis of the detective novel is nineteenth century positivism. As Karl Anders wisely remarks: 'der Detektivroman ist ein Kind des 19. Jahrhunderts, eines Jahrhunderts, das versuchte, mit der Axt des Verstandes Gott zu erschlagen.'<sup>185</sup> The beginnings of the classical detective story in Poe and Conan Doyle leave no doubt that the master detective created by them, the eccentric and intellectual amateur, is a typical product of a positivistic ideology, according to which all problems and puzzles can be solved by the application of pure reason. The almost boundless faith in human reason and confidence in the progress of mankind which characterize nineteenth century positivism are mirrored in the works of Poe and Conan Doyle, for whom there can be no such thing as the perfect crime or an unsolvable problem. Fired by the desire to prove that all 'apparent "impossibilities" are, in reality, not such',<sup>186</sup> the 'great detectives' are, despite Alewyn's protestations to the contrary, 'Kinder des naturwissenschaftlich-positivistischen Zeitalters'.<sup>187</sup>

The writer of detective novels constructs an apparently chaotic world which in the end proves to be totally susceptible of rational explanation. Marjorie Nicolson's defence of the position of the traditional detective story writer smacks of the nineteenth century, yet was written in 1929:

Perhaps we are protesting against a conception of the universe governed - if governed at all - by chance, by haphazard circumstance; against a theory which interprets the way of life as like the river in the 'Vision of Mirza', the bridge of San Luis Rey, against a conception of men and women as purposeless, aimless, impotent; against a theory of the world as wandering, devoid of purpose and meaning, in unlimited space. In our detective stories we find with relief a return to an older ethics and metaphysics: an Hebraic insistence upon justice as the measure of all things ...; a Greek feeling of inevitability, for man as the victim of circumstances and fate, to be sure, but a fate brought upon him by his own carelessness, his own ignorance, or his own choice; a Calvinistic insistence ... upon destiny ...: last of all, a scientific insistence upon the inevitable operation of cause and effect.<sup>188</sup>

What such an escapist view of life produces, is, however, a reassuring world in which there are no ultimate mysteries, in which the omnipotent detective consistently demonstrates the superiority of the ratio. The world of the classical detective story is devoid of any real complexity, for all the problems presented in it are mere problems of logic which can always be solved by the mental gymnastics of the protagonist. As Dieter Wellershoff says: 'Offenbar ist das für einen Rationalisten wie Poe eine ideale Welt. Der Verlust an Mannigfaltigkeit ist für ihn nur ein Gewinn an Übersicht, also an Kontrollierbarkeit.'<sup>189</sup>

Doderer made no secret of his scorn for the naive optimism of the nineteenth century. Alexander Novotny relates how Doderer used to refer to the 'Aufklärung' as the 'Aufklärlicht'.<sup>190</sup> As early as 1924, Doderer noted in a hitherto unpublished diary: 'Wir müssen dieses XIX. Jahrhundert endlich wie Mist hinter uns schmeißen!'<sup>191</sup> And in his published diaries, too, the novelist consistently postulates a position which could not be further removed from that of the 'generelle Tatsachengläubig-

keit',<sup>192</sup> of the positivistic rationalist:

'Rien de noble ne se fait que par un hazard' - einen hinzutretenden Zufall, ... Glaubst du, den Topf deines Lebens, diesen ganzen Galimathias, jetzt in Stunden, Tagen oder Wochen rein auskratzen zu können und einen Entscheid nicht früher ausfällen zu dürfen als nach vorhergegangener 'streng wissenschaftlicher' chemischer Untersuchung? Fühlst du in Schummer und Halbdunkel die Leitersprosse unter deiner Sohle, dann heb' dich hinauf - rien de noble ne se fait ... Du machst es am Schreibtisch nie anders, und bei jeder Gelegenheit.<sup>193</sup>

... [Stendhal] stellt ein Protokoll auf und bemüht seinen männlichen Verstand bis zur Feststellung kleinster Tatsächlichkeiten oder aber des eigenen Nichtwissens in diesem oder jenem Punkte. Nun, der für ihn fern-zukünftige Mensch von 1880, zu welchem er (1835) ausdrücklich spricht, der glaubte ja an Tatsachen, und nur an sie, die er greifen wollte wie ein Kind den Regenbogen. Stendhal mußte alles mit Zeichnungen ergänzen, so unvollständig blieb im Sprachlichen seine Tatsachenwelt!<sup>194</sup>

Spät erst befreunde ich mich mit dem Leben. Ich hatte es stets gegen den Strich gebürstet, es ganz gegen die ihm innewohnende Mechanik zu rationalisieren versucht: um es auszuschließen, um ihm zu entrinnen.<sup>195</sup>

Eine der Voraussetzungen unseres Lebens ist die Unmöglichkeit, es wissenschaftlich komplett zu durchdringen: es vollständig aufzuzählen, es zu inventarisieren.<sup>196</sup>

Further evidence of Doderer's attitude towards positivism can be found in Die Merowinger in the parody of Dr. Horn, whom Dieter Liewerscheidt aptly describes as a 'Relikt aus der Wissenschaftsgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts'.<sup>197</sup> However, perhaps the most striking illustration of Doderer's anti-rationalism is his essay 'Die Wiederkehr der Drachen', in which he argues the case for the existence of dragons as a perfect example of the chaotic but fruitful richness of life, which the positiv-

ists refused to acknowledge:

Uns alle bewohnt Linné mehr, als wir ahnen. Er hat (sehr zum Unterschiede von Brehm) eine Art von zoologischem Totalitarismus geschaffen, innerhalb dessen nicht sein kann, was nicht sein darf, um mit Christian Morgenstern zu reden. Ebenso, wenn heute in irgendeinem zivilisierten Menschen die uralte Gespensterfurcht sich regt: statt zu wirksamer Beschwörung auf jeden Fall innerlich bereit zu sein, beruft er sich mehr oder weniger bewußt auf den Positivismus des 19. Jahrhunderts, welcher dekretiert hat, daß es so etwas einfach nicht gäbe.<sup>198</sup>

This view is echoed by René Stangeler in Die Strudlhofstiege: 'Im vorigen Jahrhundert, da hat man alles für reinen Unsinn und für bloße Fabeln und Sagen gehalten, was in den von der Wissenschaft einmal aufgestellten Rahmen nicht gepaßt hat, aber seitdem sind doch viele neue Viecher noch entdeckt worden, und heute glaubt man nicht mehr, daß es ganz reine Fabelwesen gibt.'<sup>199</sup>

It was the positivists' pretension to be able to catalogue and classify the 'whole' of life that led Doderer to draw an analogy between their ideology and that of the totalitarian state.<sup>200</sup>

An analogy with the ideology of the classical detective story writer would have been equally appropriate, for the basic theoretical precept of the methodology of the 'great detective' is nothing less than a 'total' abnegation of the complexity of life itself.

The ordered, logically constructed world of the classical detective story stands in sharp contrast to modern man's experience of the chaos of life. The reader of the detective novel

konnte sich ... aus der unreinen Welt in eine Welt der reinen, wenn auch eingekleideten Abstraktionen retten. Ihr lag die Überzeugung - oder doch die Hoffnung - zugrunde, daß die Moral

genauso funktioniere wie die Mathematik, daß es eine einzige und unteilbare Wahrheit gebe, daß Vernunft alle Probleme lösen könne, daß Böses am Ende unterliege und das Gute triumphiere. Es ist die - für uns in Auschwitz und Vietnam verbrannte - Zuversicht des 19. Jahrhunderts, in dem sich unter der Regina-Imperatrix Viktoria das britische Empire in Glück und Glanz entfaltet hatte.<sup>201</sup>

The cosy, fairy-tale world of assured values and endless optimism in which the detective story was born and flourished, had, of course, long since vanished even when Doderer's novel was first published in 1938. Yet, paradoxically, as Peter Fischer suggests, it seems to be an inherent part of the development of the detective novel that, in terms of the history of ideas, it is perennially decades behind the times.<sup>202</sup> This curious phenomenon is above all evident in the fact that the fundamental optimism of the detective novel survived the vicissitudes of the First World War and that the years immediately following this catastrophe saw a steady rise in the fortunes of the rigidly defined classical detective novel, culminating in the 1930s in what Julian Symons describes as the (second) 'Golden Age' of detective fiction.<sup>203</sup>

Given Doderer's philosophical objections to the optimistic rationalism of the nineteenth century positivists and his familiarity with the traditional form of the detective novel, one might expect the author to be equally decisive in his rejection of this 'späte, doch dauerhafte Blüte des Vernunftglaubens der Aufklärung'.<sup>204</sup> Doderer's respect for Conan Doyle would, however, appear to contradict this view. Yet the author's admiration for the creator of Sherlock Holmes might well be nothing more than a reflection of Doderer's life-long penchant towards somewhat melodramatic sensationalism as reflected in the plots of his major novels. Be that as it may, Doderer explicitly repudiated the very



essence of the classical or 'problem' detective novel, the 'puzzle':

Rätsel · Rätsel-Machen, das ist Sache der Flach-Köpfe, denen nichts rätselhaft ist. Unsereiner ist da überfragt, und mit Rätseln überlastet, bei jedem Blick in die Welt. Wozu brauch' ich Rätsel? Sie wachsen einem über den Kopf, man hat nicht not, sie zu machen. Mein schäbiges Ich allein ist mir ganz rätselhaft genug. Den Rätsel-Onkeln ihres aber kann ich mir vorstellen, und es kann mir gestohlen werden. (Puzzle und Rätsel und 'Frag mich was' und 'Quiz' aller Art sind Beschönigungsformen eines ganz grauenhaften Vacuums der Geister.)<sup>205</sup>

It does not seem too far-fetched, then, to suggest that Doderer consciously realized that a world in which all problems could be solved with the help of a magnifying-glass and a little 'ratiocination' was an absurdity, and that the mythologized 'great detective' no longer had a place in the chaos of the modern industrial world. In Mord Doderer uses the form of the detective novel to demonstrate not the superiority of the human intellect, but the sheer impotence of man in the face of the irrational workings of life. Doderer's novel so consistently and so obviously breaks all the 'rules' of the classical detective story that it is not overstating the case to suggest that he has produced an anti-detective novel. For every aspect of Mord that alludes to the features familiar from the classical detective story is clearly out of step with the mainstream of detective fiction in the 1930s.

Dietrich Weber characterizes the traditional detective's approach to a crime as 'grundsätzlich ein indirektes (der Detektiv stürzt nicht auf den Fall zu, sondern umkreist ihn)',<sup>206</sup> but the detective's indirect approach is both consciously planned and methodical, and Doderer never tires of asserting that no one ever achieves what he consciously strives for, since life does not allow itself to be pieced together according

to one's wishes like a 'fertiges Zusammenlegspiel'.<sup>207</sup> There could be no clearer indictment of the great detective's approach to a crime, for Doderer's belief in the essential 'indirectness' of life stands in sharp contrast to the pragmatic, tidy-minded approach of the positivist. For Doderer, the very essence of the detective's methodology is untenable: 'Sicherheit und Behagen sind (ebenso wie Ordnung) direkt angestrebt einer Verneinung des Lebens-Prozesses überhaupt gleichzusetzen ...',<sup>208</sup> Castiletz is anything but a 'Thinking Machine',<sup>209</sup> or an overdimensional brain which is forced to drag a human body around with it all day.<sup>210</sup> On the contrary, Doderer's 'detective' himself turns out to be the 'murderer', a solution which Willard Huntington Wright rejects as 'neither new nor legitimate, ... [for] the reader feels not that he has been deceived fairly by a more skilful mind than his own, but deliberately lied to by an inferior'.<sup>211</sup> When Agatha Christie revealed that the narrator and co-investigator, Dr. Sheppard, was the culprit in The Murder of Roger Ackroyd in 1926, the 'outcry was long and loud. This, it was said, was a deliberate cheat on the reader.'<sup>212</sup>

In another ironic inversion of the classical schema, the reader of Mord does not have in the detective 'einen überlegenen Vormund',<sup>213</sup> who thinks and acts for him and against whom he can measure his own perspicacity. Although Doderer himself maintains that the reader of Mord makes all his discoveries together with and at the same time as Castiletz,<sup>214</sup> what the author says of his planned tetralogy Roman No. 7 could also be applied to Mord: 'der Blick vom apperzeptiven Leser auf die deperzeptive Existenz: das ist R[oman No. 7]'.<sup>215</sup> For, in a subtle shift of emphasis, Doderer allows the perceptive reader to anticipate the outcome of Castiletz's investigations and to recognize the latter's unwillingness to face the facts: 'Von einem bestimmten Punkte an darf der Leser wohl ahnen, und die Gegenbewegung Conrads als eine solche erkennen.'<sup>216</sup>

Similarly, although in the classical detective novel fortuity and coincidence are 'outlawed as beneath the dignity of the self-respecting craftsman',<sup>217</sup> Doderer's protagonist arrives at the truth not by employing his powers of ratiocination, but with the aid of a series of more or less incredible accidents and coincidences. In accordance with Doderer's ideology of the indirectness of life, Conrad's learning process consists in the realization that any conscious, rationally planned attempt at moulding life to correspond to a preconceived notion cuts across the grain of life itself. Thus what Castiletz has been trying all along to obtain by conscious efforts is unexpectedly provided for him by the mysterious workings of life: 'Zum ersten Male fühlte Castiletz, daß ihm bereits etwas nachzulaufen begann, was er bisher stets aufzusuchen getrachtet hatte: hier war das Gespräch ganz überraschend und von selbst auf Louison gekommen ...' (p.207). Like Georg in the 'Divertimento No.V', Castiletz experiences how things work out of their own accord, irrespective of his misguided attempts at playing the detective.

Castiletz is not the only 'detective' in Doderer's works whose conscious efforts to solve a mystery meet with little success. Heinz Politzer suggests that the plot to embezzle Quapp's rightful inheritance in Die Dämonen 'is not solved in the decisive way of a true mystery story but allowed to drag on toward its happy resolution under the benign prodding of Geyrenhoff',<sup>218</sup> but what Politzer fails to realize is that all Geyrenhoff's 'prodding' is to no avail. It is only when the latter and Stangeler proceed with an 'unbewußte Direktheit',<sup>219</sup> which is diametrically opposed to the methodology of the traditional detective, that they as it were instinctively approach the truth. When Geyrenhoff turns detective, however, and betrays a feeling of superiority akin to the arrogance of the master detective - 'als Akteur sah ich mich mit Vergnügen, und wie auf einer höheren Ebene des Lebens, wo man bereits geruhig vor

dem Schaltbrette steht und zwischen den Hebeln wählt, um etwa die oder jene Verbindung herzustellen',<sup>220</sup> - he finds to his dismay that life is curiously reluctant to allow itself to be manipulated so easily: 'Da stand ich nun, mit meinen Kombinationen, mit meiner Entschlossenheit zu einer "höheren Form des Handelns" (verflixt: auch das "Schaltbrett" fiel mir obendrein noch ein!) wie die Kuh vorm Scheunentor. Denn alles hatte sich ja ganz von selbst gemacht. Ich war eine lächerliche Figur. Ich konnte getrost verreisen.'<sup>221</sup>

Like Schlaggenberg in this instance, Castiletz is clearly and consistently a parody of the 'great detective'. Even despite the frequent benevolent interventions by 'life' on Conrad's behalf, the would-be detective is finally able to obtain a full account of the murder and its consequences only with the help of an unmotivated confession, another device frowned upon by the detective story rule-makers. Characteristically, it is only after Botulitzky has explained his and Castiletz's role in the untimely death of Louison Veik that the 'detective' is able to interpret correctly the facts which were readily available to him all along: 'Der Tod des Mädchens ist meiner Ansicht nach so eingetreten, daß sie - einen Augenblick bewußtlos hinaus und sozusagen voraushängend - mit der Stirn gegen eine jener Mauerkanten raste, die sich bei den Durchgängen zum Nachbarstollen befinden. Ich sah das selbst, als ich im Tunnel war' (p.352).

Although for the classical detective there is no question of failure - 'Hercule Poirot does not fail',<sup>222</sup> - Castiletz clearly does fail, at least as a detective. His 'detective work' exemplifies the words spoken by Robert Veik in the novel: 'Der Mensch hat von seiner hohen Abkunft allermeist nur - die Ansprüche behalten, nicht die Fähigkeiten' (p.186). The haughtiness of the great detective, who gives the impression 'of a complacent modern deity presiding over some grotesque ceremonial of pagan

worship',<sup>223</sup> stands in stark contrast to Doderer's presentation of the 'Ohnmacht seines [des Menschen] schwächlichen Geistes' (p.186).

In their peremptory denial of all possible links between Doderer's novel and the 'Kriminalroman', critics of Mord appear to have robbed themselves of the possibility of drawing fruitful parallels between Doderer's early work and the many more recent attempts at a parody of the classical detective story, or, as Holzapfel dubs them, 'critiques of pure reason'.<sup>224</sup> For although since the 1950s the great detective has been systematically stripped of the mythical aura which traditionally surrounds him, and has become the anti-hero of modern literature, a grotesque half-brother of Sisyphus and Don Quixote, no critic has hitherto been prepared to see in Doderer's novel a possible forerunner of this major recent development in world literature. Yet the parallels between Doderer's early work and Dürrenmatt's anti-crime stories are particularly striking, and since the latter's 'Requiem auf den Kriminalroman', Das Versprechen, first appeared in book form in the same year as Mord was re-issued, 1958, one might have expected more critics than the Dutch reviewer Elisabeth Augustin to have acknowledged the similarities.<sup>225</sup> It is ironic, but symptomatic of Doderer-reception, that comparisons with Dürrenmatt abound only in the reviews of Die Merowinger, no doubt for the simple reason that Doderer's publishers suggest this very analogy in their 'Verlagsprospekt'.

It was not only the publishers' persuasive propaganda that deflected the critics' attention from the textual potentialities of Mord. Such was the impact of Doderer's two mammoth 'Viennese' novels, Die Strudlhofstiege and Die Dämonen, that an image of the author was almost immediately established and projected retrospectively onto his earlier works. Thus, although Wolfgang Paul insisted in 1958 that Mord could be treated as a completely new work, 'da damals [1938] solche Verdichtung, diese

große, breitangelegte Poesie unter den Tisch fiel',<sup>226</sup> the foreknowledge of Doderer's so-called 'Viennese trilogy' in many ways prejudices the critics' view of Mord. 'Man muß diese erste [sic] Romanschöpfung Doderers im Hinblick auf die nachgefolgten Werke einsehen',<sup>227</sup> we are assured. And it is surely only in the light of such a reading that the reviewer signing himself W.P. can claim that in Mord we find 'Menschen aus allen Schichten der Bevölkerung',<sup>228</sup> or that Hermann Fauler can conclude that the overall atmosphere of the book is 'die des gehobenen Wiener Gesellschaftsromans der zwanziger Jahre unseres Jahrhunderts'.<sup>229</sup> The overwhelming influence of Doderer's huge 'Viennese' epics also undoubtedly accounts for a comment such as the following by Wolfgang Paul: 'Er [Doderer] bringt es fertig, alle Schichten einer Großstadt dieses Jahrhunderts in den Roman zu zwingen ... Um den Durcheinanderlauf der sozialen Schichten zu schildern, läßt Doderer in seinem Roman Herrn Castiletz einem ungelösten Mordfall nachspüren.'<sup>230</sup> In a review signed B.A., the writer emphasizes the 'Charakterisierung der zahlreichen Personen' and the clear structure of the 'vielschichtige Handlung',<sup>231</sup> clichés all too familiar from the reviews of the 'Viennese novels'. The anonymous reviewer in Die Zukunft is so deeply influenced by his reading of Doderer's later works that his review merits a more detailed quotation:

Ein äußerlich erscheinendes, aber wesentliches Kennzeichen der zwei Werke, die den späten Ruhm Heimito von Doderers begründet haben, ist ihr Umfang. Es scheint, als ob Doderer sich unter tausend Seiten nicht ausdrücken könnte. Dem widerspricht auch nicht der geringe Umfang des neueren [sic] Romans, in dem er die Menschwerdung des Amtsrates Bihal [sic] erzählt. Denn diese Bihallade [sic] ist ja schließlich nur eine Marginalie zu den großen Epen. So ist man fast erstaunt, nun von Doderer einen Roman vorgesetzt zu bekommen, der sich mit dem normalen Umfang von 371 Seiten begnügt. Es zeigt sich jedoch bald, daß zwar Doderer, aber seine Figuren, seine Konzeption sich keines-

wegs begnügt haben. Doderer braucht den großen Atem, um das Oben und Unten, das ganze Panorama darzustellen, in dem sich der unterirdische Kampf zwischen Illusion und Erkenntnis, das, was Doderer mit einem Lieblingswort die Menschwerdung nennt, abspielt. Sein Realismus braucht große Räume, Barockräume, in denen Gott und Teufel, Leben und Tod, wenn auch nur in Symbolen, enthalten sind, sonst erstickt er. Seine Konstruktion braucht das Gewimmel einer Großstadtgesellschaft und ihrer Tratschsucht, um sich mit Leben zu füllen, sonst beginnt sie zu knarren ... Mord ... ist eben nicht Doderers Story, wenn sie auch eine exemplarische Menschwerdung spiegelt. Der Rahmen der Konstruktion ... ist zu eng für diesen Geschichtenerzähler, der den Tratsch zur Kunst gemacht ... hat.<sup>232</sup>

Doderer's image as a Viennese novelist is again no doubt responsible for the claim by the anonymous reviewer in Time that in Mord Doderer 'returns to the same time and place',<sup>233</sup> as in The Demons, which had been published in English three years earlier than Every Man a Murderer. The same reviewer describes Castiletz as a 'Viennese businessman'.<sup>234</sup> Ernst Alker, too, describes Conrad as a young man 'aus patrizischer Wiener Umwelt'.<sup>235</sup> Admittedly, many friends of Doderer's and connoisseurs of Vienna will no doubt recognize the author's own childhood haunts in the description of Castiletz's early years. Alker himself recalls in Erinnerung an Heimato von Doderer:

Gemeinsam mit Doderer erlebte ich in Kindheit und Jugend den gleichen Sektor von Wien: jene Teile des 3. Bezirkes, die 'Unter den Weißgerbern' und 'Erdberg' heißen, sowie den zum zweiten Bezirk gehörenden 'Schüttel', das gegenüberliegende Ufer des Donaukanals ...; ferner den großen Naturpark Prater, ebenfalls Teil des 2. Bezirkes. Bilder dieser Stadt- und Naturlandschaften finden sich in den Romanen Mord und Die Wasserfälle von Slunj.<sup>236</sup>

Yet Castiletz explicitly states in the novel that he has never been in Vienna,<sup>237</sup> and there is no evidence in the fiction to suggest that the reader should not accept this as the truth.

Karl August Horst claims that the reader who is familiar with Die Strudlhofstiege and Die Dämonen approaches the earlier novel 'sozusagen im Krebsgang'.<sup>238</sup> Horst goes on to ask:

Ist es ein bloßer Zufall, daß Kakabsa (in den Dämonen) und Kokosch ähnlich klingende Namen haben, und daß Arbeiter und Voluntär in einer Gurtweberei tätig sind? Haben nicht Molche, Nattern und Krebse, die Kokosch jäh mit dem unteren Stockwerk kommunizieren lassen, Parallelen in der Drachen- und Krakenfauna der Dämonen oder der Begegnung des jungen René mit der Ringelnatter in der Strudlhofstiege?<sup>239</sup>

And it is again surely only because of the critics' acquaintance with Doderer's later novels that Mord is described as 'Doderer before Doderer',<sup>240</sup> a 'werkstuk, waaran de romancier wellicht zijn vak heeft geleerd',<sup>241</sup> a 'Vorstufe zu späteren Werken',<sup>242</sup> a 'detour',<sup>243</sup> or a 'minor book',<sup>244</sup> written 'in Unterbrechung der Arbeit an den Hauptwerken'.<sup>245</sup>

Armin Mohler says of Doderer's readers: 'Was vor den beiden großen Romanen erschienen war - etwa jener Roman Mord (1938)... - hatten sie [die Doderer-Leser] doch nur als eine Treppe zu den beiden Hauptwerken genommen ...',<sup>246</sup> and this can certainly also be applied to many of his critics. This aspect of Doderer reception - what might be called the 'canonization' of the 'Viennese novels' - is even more evident in the critical response to Die Merowinger, which shall be examined in Chapter Two of this study.

A closer look at what reviewers of Mord ignore - the remarkable similarities between the novel and Dürrenmatt's anti-crime stories - will reveal that Doderer's work shares both the strengths and weaknesses



of Dürrenmatt's much more publicised reaction to the self-satisfied world of the classical detective story.

#### IX Doderer and Dürrenmatt

Dürrenmatt has written three 'detective novels' in which one can trace a gradual progression towards what the author considers a detective novel to end all detective novels, a 'Requiem auf den Kriminalroman'.

In his first detective story, Der Richter und sein Henker (1952), Dürrenmatt still adheres closely to the conventions of the traditional crime story. For despite Kommissär Bärlach's contention that it is impossible to operate with people 'wie mit Schachfiguren',<sup>247</sup> this is precisely what he finds himself forced to do in order to bring Gastmann to justice. Bärlach is able to manipulate the aptly-named Tschanz by virtue of the 'Kühle seiner Vernunft',<sup>248</sup> into carrying out the death sentence he himself has imposed on his adversary, and Bärlach is explicitly described as an 'unerbittlicher Schachspieler' as he toys with Tschanz at the end of the novel..<sup>249</sup> It has been claimed that Der Richter und sein Henker is not a crime novel in the sense that a detective solves the mystery of a serious crime by applying all his experience, expertise and dogged persistence and by using the techniques of modern science to bring the perpetrator of the crime to justice, thereby ensuring the supremacy of reason, justice and order.<sup>250</sup> However, in his ultimate mastery and direction of chance to his own ends, as well as in his opposition to the 'learned' criminologist Dr Lucius Lutz, Bärlach closely resembles the

mythologized omnipotent detective of the classical model; and despite his claim that he believes in intuition as opposed to modern scientific methods, it is not intuition but an ingenious and thoroughly rational plan that Bärlach employs to trap Gastmann. The same could scarcely be said of Conrad Castiletz.

Dürrenmatt takes a further step away from the traditional detective novel in his rather weak sequel to Der Richter und sein Henker, Der Verdacht (1952). Here Bärlach is able to establish the identity and past crimes of Emmenberger by means of skilful logical deduction, but his ratiocination offers him only an intellectual victory. Bärlach is reduced in the course of the novel to a ridiculous immobile thinking machine which does not have the physical capacity to put its plans into action, and it is only the chance intervention of a sort of deus ex machina, the giant Gulliver, that saves Bärlach from certain death at the hands of Emmenberger. Dürrenmatt demonstrates the discrepancy between an ingenious, logically constructed theory and the reality of life. Although Bärlach's reasoning is correct, he is unable to turn his logic into physical superiority in the concrete situation and to bring the criminal to justice. Bärlach's rescuer Gulliver emphasizes the impotence of the detective in the modern world: 'Die Zeiten sind vorüber, wo es genügt, etwas scharfsinnig zu sein, um die Verbrecher, mit denen wir es heute zu tun haben, zu stellen. Du Narr von einem Detektiv; die Zeit selbst hat dich ad absurdum geführt!',<sup>251</sup> There can be no doubt that Castiletz, too, is a 'Narr von einem Detektiv', but without Bärlach's capacity for logical deduction.

Dürrenmatt's third detective novel, Das Versprechen (1958), opens with a scathing attack on the writers of conventional detective fiction. Dr H., 'der ehemalige Kommandant der Kantonspolizei Zürich',<sup>252</sup> complains to the narrator, who himself is a crime writer:

... ich ärgere mich ... über die Handlung in euren Romanen. Hier wird der Schwindel zu toll und zu unverschämt. Ihr baut eure Handlungen logisch auf; wie bei einem Schachspiel geht es zu, hier der Verbrecher, hier das Opfer, hier der Mitwisser, hier der Nutznießer; es genügt, daß der Detektiv die Regeln kennt und die Partie wiederholt, und schon hat er den Verbrecher gestellt, der Gerechtigkeit zum Siege verholfen. Diese Fiktion macht mich wütend. Der Wirklichkeit ist mit Logik nur zum Teil beizukommen. Dabei, zugegeben, sind gerade wir von der Polizei gezwungen, ebenfalls logisch vorzugehen, wissenschaftlich; doch die Störfaktoren, die uns ins Spiel pfuschen, sind so häufig, daß allzu oft nur das reine Berufsglück und der Zufall zu unseren Gunsten entscheiden. Oder zu unseren Ungunsten. Doch in euren Romanen spielt der Zufall keine Rolle, und wenn etwas nach Zufall aussieht, ist es gleich Schicksal und Fügung gewesen; die Wahrheit wird seit jeher von euch Schriftstellern den dramaturgischen Regeln zum Fraße hingeworfen. Schickt diese Regeln endlich zum Teufel. Ein Geschehen kann schon allein deshalb nicht wie eine Rechnung aufgehen, weil wir nie alle notwendigen Faktoren kennen, sondern nur einige wenige, meistens recht nebensächliche. Auch spielt das Zufällige, Unberechenbare, Inkommensurable eine zu große Rolle. Unsere Gesetze fußen nur auf Wahrscheinlichkeit, auf Statistik, nicht auf Kausalität, treffen nur im allgemeinen zu, nicht im besonderen. Der Einzelne steht außerhalb der Berechnung. Unsere kriminalistischen Mittel sind unzulänglich, und je mehr wir sie ausbauen, desto unzulänglicher werden sie im Grunde. Doch ihr von der Schriftstellerei kümmert euch nicht darum. Ihr versucht nicht, euch mit der Realität herumzuschlagen, die sich uns immer wieder entzieht, sondern ihr stellt eine Welt auf, die zu bewältigen ist. Diese Welt mag vollkommen sein, möglich, aber sie ist eine Lüge. Laßt die Vollkommenheit fahren, wollt ihr weiterkommen, zu den Dingen, zu der Wirklichkeit, wie sich für Männer schickt, sonst bleibt ihr sitzen, mit nutzlosen Stilübungen beschäftigt ...<sup>253</sup>

In an obvious parody of Poe's The Murders in the Rue Morgue, where the theoretical introduction is followed by an exemplary 'tale of ratiocin-

ation', Dürrenmatt goes on to illustrate the impotence of an ingenious detective in the face of a world governed by the apparently haphazard workings of chance, and thus to question modern man's faith in logic and rationalism. It is in Dürrenmatt's most obvious and conscious parody of the detective story genre that the main parallel, but also the basic difference in outlook between Doderer and Dürrenmatt becomes evident. The conventional detective novel is set in a 'world without chance'. For it is evident that, if the murder method is to be retrospectively reconstructed by the detective, it must not only have been meticulously planned, but must also have gone exactly according to plan. This is why such minor disruptions of everyday life as an unexpected telephone call or visitor or a missed train connection or a flat car battery are banished from the classical detective story, as such banalities might frustrate the carefully hatched murder plot.

Both Doderer and Dürrenmatt introduce 'chance' into the sterile world of the detective novel, and thus render the complexity and chaotic richness of the modern social world and illustrate the impotence of the individual to control or even influence society. However, whereas Dürrenmatt presents 'Zufall' as the manifestation of the irrational forces which consistently thwart man's attempts at establishing a logically ordered world, and creates a world in which the perspicacious logician and the cruel workings of chance are irreconcilable opposites, Doderer's 'Zufall' appears to be an altogether more benevolent phenomenon. Dürrenmatt gradually moves away from the world of Der Richter und sein Henker, where man appears to be at the mercy of chance, which in turn seems to belong naturally on the side of evil and disorder, but in which Bärlach is nevertheless able to exploit chance to his own ends, to a world in which the irrational workings of life consistently perplex the protagonists and chance takes the form of catastrophic hazard. For although

Matthäi in Das Versprechen proceeds 'in a manner worthy of Sherlock Holmes himself',<sup>254</sup> an apparently senseless 'Zufall' in the form of a car accident prevents him from reaping the rewards of his brilliant reasoning. In Doderer's novel, in contrast, Castiletz stumbles along from one fortuitous coincidence to another, 'in einer bestimmten Rinne befangen, welche das Leben da unsichtbar bildete: in dieser Bahn aber lief alles unentrinnbar, von sogenannten Zufällen wie von festen und dichten Wänden geleitet' (p.324). But what both Castiletz and Matthäi demonstrate is man's inability to order the world according to his own preconceived notions. Dürrenmatt could clearly have been speaking for Doderer when he stated: 'Je planmäßiger die Menschen vorgehen, desto wirksamer vermag sie der Zufall zu treffen. Planmäßig vorgehende Menschen wollen ein bestimmtes Ziel erreichen. Der Zufall trifft sie dann am schlimmsten, wenn sie durch ihn das Gegenteil ihres Ziels erreichen: Das, was sie befürchteten, was sie zu vermeiden suchten (z.B. Oedipus).'<sup>255</sup> The parallel to Doderer's conception of life's imperviousness to any attempt to organize it according to rational programmes is obvious.

Dürrenmatt introduces chance as a motif in Der Richter und sein Henker, but it does not yet act as a malevolent force which intervenes to ridicule man and his impotent reason. The fact that Gastmann's actions are not motivated by moral, religious or any other rational convictions or by the desire for material gain - 'denn bei ihm sind immer zwei Dinge möglich, das Schlechte und das Gute, und der Zufall entscheidet',<sup>256</sup> - has, however, led some critics to interpret Gastmann's crimes as 'Zufallsverbrechen' which cannot be solved by means of logical deduction but only with the help of 'chance'.<sup>257</sup> What these critics fail to recognize is that Bärlach contradicts his own contention that we cannot include the haphazard workings of chance in our calculations,<sup>258</sup> for it is his ratiocinative skills that he uses to manipulate chance, embodied by Tschanz,

and to outwit Gastmann. It has also been suggested that 'in an imperfect world chance subverts Bärlach's role as a detective, making him an accomplice in crime',<sup>259</sup> but although Bärlach's actions are illegal per se, they are not far removed from those of the many classical detectives who have no qualms about driving the occasional murderer to suicide or even pardoning the occasional sinner, thus demonstrating their superior insight into the extenuating circumstances. Even Sherlock Holmes is not above subverting the law to his own ends. Far from being an anti-hero, Bärlach, in the tradition of the armchair detective, emerges triumphant despite his physical weakness, and there can be little doubt that the novel has been 'consumed' by most readers as a conventional detective novel rather than a parody of the genre. Sales of around one and a half million copies would appear to substantiate this theory. In Doderer's novel, on the other hand, we see how a crime which is truly determined by chance, here in the form of an accident, cannot be solved by rational deduction. Doderer's 'scheiternder Detektiv', a forerunner of one of the central figures of the 'nouveau roman', demonstrates convincingly how reason alone is unable to illuminate fully the mysteries of life.

In Dürrenmatt's Der Verdacht, the super-criminal is all the more dangerous because he takes 'Zufall' into account in his crimes: 'Ein indizienloses Verbrechen ist in dieser Welt des Zufalls unmöglich.'<sup>260</sup> And it is a series of coincidences that sparks off Bärlach's interest in the case: Bärlach 'happens' to be reading a copy of Life, in which there is a picture of a doctor whom Hungertobel 'happens' to recognize as resembling Emmenberger; Gulliver 'happens' to be the very man who gave Life the picture of the criminal and can therefore confirm Bärlach's suspicions. Yet it is old-fashioned logic rather than good fortune that enables Bärlach to piece together the evidence against Emmenberger. Here again Bärlach is still clearly reminiscent of the classical detective,

and this is the main weakness of Dürrenmatt's attempt to strip the figure of the detective of its heroic, mythologized aspect. That the now retired Kommissär is unable to bring Emmenberger to justice is the result of his own folly in believing that a physical wreck such as he could overcome this master criminal, but this is in no way an indictment of the process of reasoning per se. Bärlach finds himself in a position in which only chance can come to his rescue - 'Vielleicht, daß ein Zufall ihn retten könnte',<sup>261</sup> - and for once in Dürrenmatt's writings chance takes on a benevolent form in Gulliver. Yet Bärlach's failure cannot be regarded as an illustration of a world 'die ihrer Struktur nach eine Lotterie ist',<sup>262</sup> as Emmenberger claims in the novel. For it is not 'Zufall' that delivers Bärlach into the hands of his adversary, but his own complete lack of foresight.

Even in Das Versprechen, Dürrenmatt's most obvious attempt at a parody of the traditional detective novel, it could be argued that the author fails to demonstrate how logic can be refuted by 'Zufall'. For the role of chance in the novel in no way diminishes the validity of Matthäi's reasoning as applied to this particular crime. Instead of illustrating, as Doderer does, how reality is so complex that it is impervious to man's attempts to order it by means of rational calculations, instead of showing how Matthäi's highly ingenious but equally highly improbable theory is a total misconstruction, the 'reichlich schäbige Pointe',<sup>263</sup> of Dürrenmatt's story is that the detective is proved right in the end. Matthäi admittedly suffers a psychological breakdown in the face of the unpredictability of 'Zufall', but his logic, which postulates an uncomplex world susceptible of logical deduction, remains totally intact. That the great detective should decide to squander his life waiting for a killer who is already dead is a result of an idiosyncratic stubbornness inherent to Matthäi's character, but this does not make the logic of

his reasoning or the conclusions he arrives at any less convincing. Matthäi is, in reality, nothing more than an 'unlucky Bärlach',<sup>264</sup> capable of the same brilliance in his detective work - even Dr H. admits that the solution of the crime confirms Matthäi's ratiocinative genius<sup>265</sup> - but unable to accept the apparently senseless workings of chance.

Yet although the fact that Matthäi's brilliant reasoning is proved correct would appear to indicate that even in our chaotic world a murder can be solved 'durch eine lückenlose, deterministisch durch und durch begründete, eins aus dem anderen logisch ableitende Indizienkette',<sup>266</sup> the solution itself is not the result of rational deduction. On the contrary, it is only a stroke of sheer good fortune that allows Dr H. finally to learn the truth about the case. Matthäi's faith in logic is vindicated, but the reader's conception of the world as a reality which is perhaps superficially chaotic and confusing but which is in the final analysis organized according to a recognizable pattern, is destroyed. For, in a striking parallel to Doderer's novel, Dürrenmatt parodies the traditional dénouement; it is not the detective, but Frau Schrott, the other guilty party involved who reveals how the murders took place. Had this eccentric old crone not begun to prattle on about 'Albertchen selig' on her death bed, we would presumably never have learned whether Matthäi's hypothesis was correct or not. Similarly, in Mord, had Castiletz never met Botulitzky in Berlin, he would presumably never have admitted to himself the truth about his involvement in the 'murder' of Louison Veik. One certainly has the impression that, without the intervention of Botulitzky, Castiletz would never have been able to solve the mystery of Louison's death on his own.

Dürrenmatt's attempts at the 'Entmythisierung des Detektivromans',<sup>267</sup> through the introduction of 'Zufall' have led some critics to accuse him



of replacing one naive conception of the world with another. For Günter Waldmann, Dürrenmatt's attempts to illustrate the impotence of human reason by portraying the contingency of empirical reality are a 'Requiem auf die Vernunft. Ihr Standpunkt ist anti-rationalistisch; sie repräsentieren Anti-Aufklärung.'<sup>268</sup> Waldmann attributes Dürrenmatt's presentation of man's imperfection to the author's religious convictions: 'Der Mensch erweist für Dürrenmatt durch seine Endlichkeit die Unendlichkeit Gottes.'<sup>269</sup> In Dürrenmatt's anti-crime novels chance itself acts as a sort of abstract, transcendental, providential phenomenon which helps to determine man's existence, and which Waldmann aptly describes as 'Ersatzvorsehung'.<sup>270</sup>

In a key passage in Dürrenmatt's writings, the introduction to Die Panne, which itself might be considered an anti-crime tale, the author reveals that what appears in his works to be chance or accident is in reality nothing less than a cryptic representation of 'fate': 'Das Schicksal hat die Bühne verlassen, auf der gespielt wird, um hinter den Kulissen zu lauern, außerhalb der gültigen Dramaturgie, im Vordergrund wird alles zum Unfall, die Krankheiten, die Krisen.'<sup>271</sup> For this reason a number of critics accuse Dürrenmatt of having replaced a rationalistic cliché with an irrationalistic one:

Er [Dürrenmatt] konstruiert mit dem Zufall ebenso willkürlich ein abstraktes Weltmodell, wie die konventionellen Autoren von Detektivgeschichten es mit ihrer eingeführten Logik tun. Die vermeintlich komplexere Weltsicht stellt sich so als schematische Verneinung schematischer Setzungen heraus, und das ist ein bloß antirationalistischer Trick.<sup>272</sup>

An Stelle vollkommener Aufklärung kommt hier die totale 'Anti-Aufklärung'.<sup>273</sup>

Similarly, Günter Waldmann insists that it is not 'glaubensbestimmter

Irrationalismus' or 'kryptoreligiöse Anti-Aufklärung',<sup>274</sup> that we should strive for, as Dürrenmatt does, but more reason, which is the subject of constant critical reflection.

Like Dürrenmatt, Doderer attempts to refute the significance of causality in human affairs. Doderer writes of the first meeting between Castiletz and Botulitzky:

Auch muß beim ersten Zusammentreffen dieser Beiden sofort alles geschehen. Zu dieser Explosivität passt besser – überhaupt keine Vorbereitung, deren jede, sei sie wie immer, eine blosse Kausal-Kette ... bildet, die zu etwas hinführt, das aus ihr keineswegs hervorgeht – daher sie abreißt, belanglos wird, und das Ungeheuerliche nicht mindert, weil sie's nicht als ansteigende Rampe erreichen kann. Diese 'ansteigende Rampe' liegt vielmehr inwärts bei C[astiletz], und steigt bis zum 'inneren Reifepunkt'.<sup>275</sup>

A reconstructable chain of cause and effect is replaced by forces beyond the grasp of the human mind, so out-of-place in the detective novel. We have already seen how Conrad's successes as a detective are not attributable to his powers of reasoning, but to the fortuitous intervention of apparently benevolent 'Zufälle'. However, it was not only Doderer's use of 'chance' that created a distinct aura of the irrational in Mord.

When the 'murder' is perpetrated, Castiletz believes he hears a cry: 'Er glaubte jetzt einen kurzen Schrei zu hören – es klang etwa so, wie das Fallen und Zerspringen von Geschirr' (p.61). When Conrad meets Hohenlocher for the first time, the latter mentions that Gusta Veik now has only one daughter. Immediately after Conrad asks whether the other daughter has died, we are told: 'Von der Straße tönte ein Schrei, ziemlich durchdringend, wie etwa ein kleines Mädchen ihn ausstößt, das man beim Haschen endgültig erwischt' (p.126). Although the incident is

in itself banal and totally irrelevant, Castiletz is described as being 'wirklich erschrocken' (p.126). One is tempted to suggest that it is as if the cry of the dying girl has come back to haunt the 'murderer'. Moreover, when Conrad and Marianne discuss the circumstances of Louison's death for the first time, Marianne is interrupted by a strikingly similar incident. '"Es wurde ihr mit irgendeinem stumpfen Gegenstand die Schädeldedecke vollkommen zertrümmert; dies geschah in der Eisenbahn, und zwar bei Nacht ..."', Marianne says (p.172). 'Noch sprach sie, als von der Straße herauf ein Schrei ertönte, der aber immer noch wuchs, bis in die gellendste Höhe der Verzweiflung, das Zimmer hier ganz durchdringend, trotz des verschlossenen Fensters' (p.172). Once again, the incident is rationally explicable and quite plausible per se: a little girl has run away from her mother on to the road and has almost been knocked down by a car. Marianne nevertheless ascribes an extra-rational significance to the incident: '"... Man darf nur ihren Namen nennen ... schon kommt für mich ein Unglück ... Wie entsetzlich das war, dieser Schrei! Das ist sie, das hat sie gemacht ..."' (pp.174-175). One might expect Castiletz to associate the cry which seems to be conjured up by the very mention of Louison's name, with the incident on the train, but Conrad has deliberately suppressed this whole attempt at creating his own 'anecdote': 'Conrad vergaß diesen seinen ersten Versuch, die Romantik festere Formen annehmen zu lassen, gerne und bald, weil nun schon zu viel peinliches Erinnern sich damit verknüpfte' (p.63). Even years later in Berlin, Castiletz advises Günter Ligharts: '"Ich kann mich eigentlich, wenn ich's gerade will, an vieles nicht erinnern ... an sehr vieles nicht"' (p.303).

The motif of the 'Schrei' recurs repeatedly as Castiletz sets about his investigations into the mystery of Louison's death. Inkrat declares: '" ... außerdem zeigt die Erfahrung, daß Eisenbahnräuber nicht selten Tunnelstrecken bevorzugen, wegen des Lärms, der einzelne Geräusche oder

etwa einen Schrei unhörbar macht"' (p.215). A little later Inkrat adds: "'Einen Schrei oder ein verdächtiges Geräusch hatte niemand gehört, weder ein Fahrgast noch jemand von dem Personal. Die Nachbarn des Fräulein Veik waren mehrere junge Leute, die tranken und lachten; diese fuhren nicht weit, um Mitternacht etwa waren alle ausgestiegen, ...' (p.217). Even now Castiletz is unable or unwilling to draw the obvious conclusions from the series of clues which life contrives to provide him with. Later, the painter Maria Rosanka relates to Conrad an incident which occurred when she met Louison at the Stuttgarter Hauptbahnhof when the latter was passing through on what proved to be her final journey: "'Ich erinnere mich genau, daß sie ganz unverhältnismäßig auf dem Bahnsteig erschrocken ist, weil ein Rollwagen mit Gepäck knapp hinter ihr vorbeifuhr; sie sprang beiseite und stieß einen kleinen Schrei aus. Sonst aber war sie alles eher als ängstlich ..."' (p.252). Castiletz still stubbornly refuses to acknowledge the truth about Louison's death. However, Botulitzky tells Conrad in the end exactly how Louison died, and adds: "'...kurz, sie schrie auf und fiel gleichzeitig zusammen ..."' (p.345). Castiletz's reaction reveals that he has been subconsciously aware of the message which life itself seems to have been trying so hard to provide him with: "'Sie schrie?" fragte er. "Ja, kurz und stark. Es klang, wie wenn man Teller zerschlägt". "Dann habe ich mich also nicht getäuscht, damals", sagte Conrad' (p.346).

Further evidence of what Schröder disparagingly refers to as the mystifying irrationalism that pervades the novel<sup>276</sup> can be found in the views of the professional policeman, Inkrat, which are diametrically opposed to those of the conventional, rationalistic detective:

Unser Staunen über die raschen und vielen Urteile, welche überall rund um uns und in bezug auf alles und jedes abgegeben werden, kommt, wie ich glaube, daher, daß wir sozusagen immer

wieder auf die Urteilsform hereinfallen, in welcher all diese Lebensäußerungen erfolgen, die jedoch eben nur der Form nach und mit ihrer logischen Geste - wozu ja die Sprache zwingt! - als Urteile auftreten, innen aber mit ganz der gleichen Substanz erfüllt sind wie irgendeine der vielen Zuckungen des Lebens, im Angriff oder in der Verteidigung, im Versuch der Behauptung des eigenen Werts oder der Herabsetzung des fremden, im Versuche, laut zu sagen, was man derzeit selbst gerne glauben würde, weil es für die eigene Lebenskraft stärkend wäre ... kurz: was wir, immer wieder von der logischen Form, in der hier das ganz unlogische Leben auftritt, fasziniert, für 'Urteile' halten, das ist wesentlich gar nicht verschieden von der raschen Handbewegung etwa, mit welcher man die Mücke abwehrt, oder von der gleitenden Veränderung des Gesichtsausdruckes beim Gespräch mit verschiedenen und verschiedenartigen Personen in einer Gesellschaft ... und hier wundern wir uns nicht über die Geschwindigkeit der automatischen Reaktion. Jene 'Urteile' aber sind durchaus gar nichts anderes, nur eben in ein logisches Kostüm geschlüpft - mit welchem die Sprache jede Reaktion bei ihrem Austritte durch den Mund bekleidet. Ein willkürlich geschöpftes Probierrglas voll trüber Flüssigkeit des Lebens, nur eben in der logischen Eprouvette, das sind die 'Urteile'; sie kommen mindestens so rasch zustande wie ein Husteln, ein Lächeln, ein Ärger. Ja, sie sind im wesentlichen nichts anderes als der Zustand des Teints, den wir gerade zeigen, oder unsere zeitweilige Vorliebe, auf der rechten Seite und dann wieder links einzuschlafen. In der Tat, die Urteilsweise der meisten Menschen besteht einfach darin, daß sie ihre eigenen Ausdünstungen generalisieren. (pp.204-205)

Hohenlocher ironically alludes to the attitude which one would expect to find in a detective: "'Und so spricht ein Feldherr, dessen Sache ruhige Überlegung sein sollte!" rief Hohenlocher. "Aber schlimmer finde ich es noch, daß ein Kriminalist nicht an die Logik glaubt, auf welcher er hohe Schule reiten sollte"' (p.206). Inktrat, however, is adamant: "'Rein logische Urteile gibt es im praktischen Leben überhaupt nicht ... und schon gar nicht in der Kriminalistik. Auf diese Weise ist noch kein Fall auf-

geklärt worden ..."' (p.206). It is a paradigmatic example of this essentially irrational view that Castiletz proceeds to provide with his 'investigations'.

On the face of it, Conrad's death, however unusual, would appear to be rationally explicable, but here again Doderer inverts the pattern of the conventional detective novel, where the ratio is a key to an understanding of the workings of life. For what appears to be an unfortunate but nevertheless rationally explicable accident is invested with what Stanley Kauffmann describes as a 'ludicrously inappropriate metaphysical aroma'.<sup>277</sup> Although the physical cause of the gas explosion is carefully motivated in the novel, the critics ascribe a variety of interpretations to the incident. For Friedrich Fabri, the explosion 'spielt den Deus ex machina und löst alle Konflikte ... Hier, wo sich der eigentliche innere Konflikt bietet, bricht der Dichter abrupt ab.'<sup>278</sup> The reviewer who signs himself v advises us that Castiletz dies in a gas explosion 'die er nicht verschuldet hat, letzten Endes aber mit der gleichen Konsequenz, mit der er sein Leben in den Dienst der Wahrheit stellte',<sup>279</sup> by which he presumably means that just as Castiletz lived for the truth he now dies for it. For Wilhelm Müller, Conrad's death is 'ungewollt' and 'sinnlos' but comes 'wie eine Sühne'.<sup>280</sup> Similarly, in a review signed B.K. the critic interprets Conrad's death as a 'Buße',<sup>281</sup> and for the reviewer signing himself E.M., Castiletz's steady progress towards external success is counterbalanced by his increasing inner entanglement which he finally expiates in death.<sup>282</sup> Hermann Fauler maintains: 'Den rächenden Schicksalsmächten ... entgeht weder ein wissentlicher Mörder noch ein wie Castiletz Frevelnder. Und nur diese antike Auffassung des Schicksals ist es, die Doderers Story zugrunde liegen kann, wenn anders am Ende des Romans Castiletz' Tod hinreichend motiviert erscheinen soll, anstatt mehr oder weniger zufällig verursacht.'<sup>283</sup> A somewhat perplexed Peter Deane

asks:

Are we to understand then, that by recognizing a particular historical guilt (or perhaps a metaphysical one) Conrad has lost his innocence? Or, possibly, he has uncovered his own unconscious childhood guilt and realizes that his entire life has been determined by a misplaced pencil? If so, what are we to conclude when, the day after his awakening, Conrad is killed by a gas-oven explosion? That life is, after all, only a question of circumstance? That it is impossible to live with the truth? Or that von Doderer didn't know how else to end the story?<sup>284</sup>

The anonymous reviewer in Time, on the other hand, suggests: 'When he [Conrad] finds out at last how the death [of Louison] occurred, he suddenly loses what has become his only reason for living. He dies in an accident that may have been a suicide.'<sup>285</sup> The reviewer is thus led to conclude that the novel is a 'study of mental collapse'.<sup>286</sup> Doderer himself seems to have anticipated such an interpretation, which has, of course, no basis in the text: 'So "natürlich" und "richtig" ein Selbstmord hier erscheinen möchte: dichterisch wäre das eine hinkende, verächtliche Lösung. Deshalb muss, durch das halbe Buch schon, der Autor einen Tod heranzüchten, der dann bereit ist, im endlich gegebenen Augenblicke den notwendigen Sensenschwung zu tun.'<sup>287</sup>

Willy Kramp, on the other hand, interprets Conrad's death as an expression of the latter's freedom, and wonders whether this freedom is not in reality 'erst Voraussetzung und Beginn eines von Gott erneuerten Lebens'.<sup>288</sup> Similarly, Dietrich Weber sees Castiletz's death as 'alles andere als tragisch':<sup>289</sup>

Castiletz ... hat seinen Charakter und sein Leben so gänzlich überwunden, daß er nicht mehr lebensfähig ist. Er hat seine

Kräfte verbraucht ... Seine Menschwerdung ist von solcher Absolutheit, daß sie einer Überwindung des Menschseins gleichkommt. Er hat mit seiner Tat, indem er sein Schicksal bedingungslos annimmt, alle Bewährung paradigmatisch antizipiert. Ihm bleibt nichts mehr zu tun übrig. Er ist nicht nur frei, er ist erlöst. Einer letztlichen Erlösung kann freilich nur der Tod folgen, der aber, als solche Folge schon aus der Sinnlosigkeit gerissen, eine sinnvolle Fügung bedeutet ... Wie jede Sinnlosigkeit, die eine solche nur für den initiierten Augenblick ist, ordnet sich dieser Tod letztlich einem höheren Sinnzusammenhang ein. Einmal ist es jene Erlösung und zum anderen die Art und Weise, wie er geschieht, was ihm sowohl strukturell in Bezug auf den Roman als auch lebensmechanisch legitimiert. Wie nämlich Castiletz unvermerkt durch selbstbefangene Spielerei den Tod Louison Veiks verursacht hat, so wird er selbst ein Opfer ebensolcher Selbstbefangenheit eines anderen Menschen. Das aber heißt: wie sein Leben schließlich sein und nur sein Leben geworden ist, aus der Anonymität bloßen Daseins gerissen, so findet er am Ende seinen Tod, der nur ihm gehört. Louison Veik ist sein Leben gewesen, und indem er ihren Tod stirbt, scheint es, als habe er dem Schicksal selbst den Tod abgerungen, um seinem Fall über sein irdisches Leben hinaus exemplarische Gültigkeit zu geben ...<sup>290</sup>

The explosion which, as we have seen, occurred in Düsseldorf on the very day Mord was first published, would appear to support Weber's theory that the ending of the novel is 'lebensmechanisch legitimiert', but there can be no doubt that his interpretation of Conrad's death as 'fateful' merely underlines the irrationality of what at first sight is a rationally explicable phenomenon. One final interpretation of Conrad's death hitherto ignored by the critics is provided indirectly by Doderer himself, and would appear to be more plausible since it explains the ending of Mord in terms of Doderer's highly idiosyncratic and irrational thinking. For anyone familiar with Doderer's thinking as reflected in his published journals can have no doubt that what Geyrenhoff says of Gyurkicz in Die



Dämonen reflects the author's view of how Gyurkicz's death should be interpreted, and could certainly also be applied to Castiletz in Mord:

Was ihn getötet hatte, war für mich, in diesen helllichtigen Sekunden, nicht die Kugel, sondern der Starkstrom des Lebens selbst, von Imre zum Kurzschluß gebracht. Es ist unmöglich, eine innere Oberfläche, einen doppelten Boden, durch viele Jahre mit Emblemen zu bestellen und zu schmücken, um dann mit einem von ihnen jenen doppelten Boden zu zerschlagen: der plötzliche Kontakt mit der nackten und direkten, gar nicht irgendwie gemeinten, sondern nur sich selbst bedeutenden Konkretion ist tödlich. Lügen, die eingeleitet sind und im Haushalt der Seele ihre notwendige Rolle spielen, können nicht plötzlich durch die Wahrheit ersetzt werden. Jede zweite Wirklichkeit, von der ersten schlagartig verdrängt, führt nicht in diese, sondern in den Tod.<sup>291</sup>

This interpretation of Doderer in terms of the terminology of the author's own fiction is intended to illuminate fully the irrational undertones of Castiletz's death and of Doderer's conception of fate in general. Yet it is a striking fact that while many critics and reviewers of Mord note the role of a hidden order in the novel, few accuse the author of being irrational, far less anti-rational, as is the case with Dürrenmatt. Wilhelm Müller, for instance, states: 'die verworrenen Schicksalsfäden, die sich im Sinnlosen vereinen, den Menschen in Schuld stürzen und zur Sühne zwingen: das ist das Grundmotiv in diesem glänzend aufgebauten Roman.'<sup>292</sup> Hans Joachim Weseloh is equally uncritical of the 'Unbeirrbarkeit' and 'Folgerichtigkeit eines unbestechlichen Schicksals'.<sup>293</sup> Hermann Lenz sees Doderer's conception of fate as the very basis of the novel:

In dem Roman Mord ... bestimmt das von den Göttern auferlegte

Verhängnis die menschlichen Schicksale ...

Conrad Castiletz ist eine Figur, an der sich ein unausweichliches Geschick im Sinne der antikischen Schicksalsvorstellung vollzieht.

... Der Aufbau des Romans, der sich willkürlich und lose zu entwickeln scheint, zwingt nach der Mitte auch die scheinbar absichtslosesten Zufälle in sein Kraftfeld. So wird die schicksalhafte Macht des Verhängnisses, der jede Figur in der Erzählung unterworfen ist, durch die Komposition unterstützt. Keiner vermag seinem Geschick auszuweichen, das sich mit bezwingender Folgerichtigkeit vollzieht, möge er noch so schuldlos sein. Denn Castiletz verfällt ohne Schuld jenem Verhängnis, das seinen Untergang fordert ...

Die Antike ... ist in diesem Roman gegenwärtig, als hätten die Parzen und nicht der Autor die Schicksalsfäden ineinander verwoben ...<sup>294</sup>

Lenz classifies the novel as one in which 'Elemente des Entwicklungs-, des psychologischen und des Kriminalromans durch antike Schicksalsgläubigkeit eingeschmolzen sind'.<sup>295</sup> For Ingrid Werkgartner Ryan, Conrad's story is 'geradezu menschlich' since, like Oedipus, he is able to attract 'die Aufmerksamkeit des Schicksals'.<sup>296</sup> Ryan also points out that for anyone who trusts in 'chance' in Doderer's novels, the way to an 'appercptive' life is open,<sup>297</sup> but she is equally uncritical of Doderer's 'fatology'. Similarly, the anonymous reviewer in the TLS observes that, 'whenever a character is ready for a certain experience, life will oblige', but insists that, 'although Doderer is not without his beneficent stage-managing of reality, ... in essence he imitates the confusion of reality as both intractable and at the same time morally binding.'<sup>298</sup>

Hans Joachim Schröder, on the other hand, is far more critical of the role fate plays in Mord. He warns that 'Zufall' takes on a dubious character when it is conceived, as is repeatedly the case in Doderer, as a 'Machination des Schicksals'.<sup>299</sup> A close examination of the appar-

ent coincidences in Mord reveals that they are in reality the workings of some hidden order which intervenes systematically to guide Castiletz along an apparently preconceived path. If we accept Klaus-Detlef Müller's definition of fate in literature as 'das sinnstiftende Eingreifen einer über den Vorgängen waltenden Vernunft',<sup>300</sup> we must agree with Schröder that the coincidences in Mord represent nothing more than the 'verlängerter Arm des Schicksals, das den Menschen auf vorbestimmtem Wege unbittlich am Zügel führt'.<sup>301</sup>

Schröder is not the only critic who is irritated by the role of a benevolent fate masquerading in the guise of chance in Doderer's novels. Sylvia Hayward-Jones observes ironically: 'The power of Destiny ..., or so we are led to believe, does not desert man, even when he has strayed on to the wrong path.'<sup>302</sup> Andrew Barker is equally sceptical of Doderer's use of 'chance': 'For Doderer, there appears to be no such thing as chance - even serious accidents seem to have a beneficial purpose ...',<sup>303</sup> Martin Swales, too, complains that fate in Doderer's works always appears to be on the side of his protagonists: 'Man hat den Eindruck, daß die Prüfungen, die an den Menschen herantreten, sehr leicht sind, und daß er sie überwinden kann, wenn er Doderers Lebensphilosophie folgt.'<sup>304</sup>

It is, however, Schröder's conclusions that are most decisive and of most significance here. For Schröder attacks Doderer for having established a philosophy of life systematically based on superstition: 'Abergläubisch entwirft Doderer das Modell eines totalen Determinismus in dem Zufall, Schicksal, Charakter und Physiognomie wie Zahnräder ineinandergreifen, um den Tod des Helden herbeizuführen ...',<sup>305</sup> In Schröder's criticism of the irrationality of what Schmidt-Dengler calls Doderer's unreflected conception of fate,<sup>306</sup> we see a clear parallel to those critics of Dürrenmatt who accuse him of replacing the oversimplified view of life which prevails in the rationalistic classical detec-

tive story with an equally oversimplified irrational conception of life:

Da der Schicksalsglaube der Apperzeptionsforderung immer schon vorausliegt, kann es zu einer Umkehrung der Beziehung, nämlich zu einer Infragestellung der Schicksalsidee durch die Apperzeption, nicht kommen. Auf diese Weise verfällt der Apperzeptionsgedanke, der zunächst in sich ein rationales, empirisches Element enthält, hoffnungslos einer irrationalistischen Weltanschauung. Alles, was die Apperzeption an Möglichkeiten des Bewußtwerdens und damit auch der Selbstbestimmung enthält, wird entwertet durch die Macht des Fatums, dessen Undurchschaubarkeit und Eigengesetzlichkeit Doderer blind voraussetzt. Das Schicksal erscheint geradezu als die gesetzgebende Kraft, die das Leben des einzelnen ebenso beherrscht wie das der Gesellschaft. Ausdrücklich wird damit allen aufklärerischen und materialistischen Denkansätzen widersprochen, die im gesellschaftlich-historischen und auch im individuellen Leben rational begründbare Wirkungszusammenhänge erkennen.<sup>307</sup>

However, the conclusions which Schröder draws from such observations reveal one vital difference between the reception of Doderer and that of Dürrenmatt. And here, too, we see the true significance of the lengthy and detailed comparison with Dürrenmatt. For whereas Dürrenmatt's critics restrict themselves to criticism of the author's irrationality per se or attribute it to the author's religious convictions, Schröder links Doderer's irrationality with the latter's Nazi past and ascribes pernicious, fascistic undertones to it:

Die geistigen Grundlagen dieses Werks [Mord] bestehen aus einem dumpfen, vernunftfeindlichen Vorurteilsdenken, in dem Aristokratismus und fatalistischer Determinismus nur oberflächlich kaschiert sind durch einen Ausblick auf Freiheit und Selbstbestimmung. Selbst die formale Vielfalt des Romans mit ihrem dichten Geflecht aus Symbolbezügen, Querverbindungen und Doppel-

deutigkeiten dient am Ende dazu, die geschilderten Personen zu entmündigen: eingesponnen in ein Netz von Vorbedeutungen, läuft ihr Leben wie ein Uhrwerk. Ohne daß Mord 'direkt' dem Faschismus das Wort redet, bildet er doch 'indirekt' jene irrationalistischen Vorstellungen ab, auf deren Fundament der Nationalsozialismus entstanden ist.<sup>308</sup>

It is ironic that, because Schröder obviously accepts Weber's premise that the only possible starting point for an analysis of Mord is as a 'Bericht über eine Selbstbegegnung',<sup>309</sup> he totally disregards the detective element in the novel. For this reason Schröder fails even to consider the Nazi attitude to the conventional detective novel, a viewpoint that might in many ways have been used to support his argument. Once again we see how the peremptory dismissal of the detective element in Mord has as a logical concomitant a limitation of the critic's perspective.

#### X The Detective Novel and the Totalitarian State: Doderer's Anti-Detective Novel in its Historical Context

Before discussing the Nazi attitude to the conventional detective story, we shall examine in detail the views of the few critics who attempt to relate Mord to the historical context of its first publication. It is a striking and revealing fact that of all the reviews of the 1958 re-issue of Doderer's novel, which was written 'in part in a hotel in Dachau',<sup>310</sup> only one critic alludes to the political situation in Germany twenty years earlier. There can be little doubt that the lack of direct political

relevance and 'engagement' on the part of the author suited most critics in post-war Germany, and this is, as we shall see in due course, one of the keys to Doderer reception. However, the anonymous reviewer in Die Frau did observe in 1958:

Das Buch ist in der Nazizeit veröffentlicht worden. Aber man findet darin folgende Stelle: 'Immer habe ich es mir schauderhaft vorgestellt, in einer Zeit wie jener damaligen zu leben, in Spanien nämlich, als es dort die Inquisition gab ... Der geringste Verdacht oder irgendeine Angeberei genügte ja, um das Entsetzlichste herbeizuführen. Wie konnte man damals überhaupt seines Lebens froh werden oder sich mit irgendetwas beschäftigen ...' [p.202]. So eine Bemerkung macht man nicht beiläufig in den Tagen der uneingeschränkten Hitlerherrschaft ...<sup>311</sup>

The reviewer's contention that Doderer appears to be making a bold protest against the machinations of the totalitarian state, which somehow managed to slip through the fingers of the censor, could easily be substantiated with remarks from the text such as the following by Castiletz:

Es hat doch auch in neuerer Zeit solche Dinge gegeben.(p.203)  
Eigentlich eine merkwürdige Vorstellung; daß man zum Beispiel durch irgendeinen ganz nebensächlichen und dummen kleinen Umstand sich verdächtig gemacht hätte und als harmloser Mensch nun ständig beobachtet und überwacht würde. (p.203)

Yet if one were to take Inktrat's objections to Conrad's viewpoint out of context in the same way as the reviewer in Die Frau carefully selects her quotation, one could equally easily argue that the author appears to be expressing his implicit support for the totalitarian regime:

Was an Schrecken oder Großartigkeiten von einer Zeit im

Menschengedenken übriggeblieben und auf uns gekommen ist, sehen wir durch die weite Perspektive gleichsam zusammengedrängt. Damals war es verteilt und schwamm in der Flut einer ganzen Zeitstimmung, ja, es befand sich vielfach fast in der Schwebe des beinahe Selbstverständlichen. Wenn ich ein wenig nur über-treiben würde, der Deutlichkeit halber, dann könnte ich mir vorstellen, daß von der Inquisition die meisten so wenig was bemerkt haben dürften wie die Zeitgenossen der sogenannten 'Renaissance' von der großen Kunstepoche in Italien. (p.202)

Inkrat even goes on to insist 'daß es überall auf der Welt eine Geheim-polizei gibt und geben muß' (p.203), which he interprets as 'gewisser-maßen nur ein Symbol und um nichts mehr als die Sichtbarmachung einer ganz allgemeinen Tatsache des Lebens an einer bestimmten Stelle und in Form einer notwendigen Institution' (p.203). But Inkrat is no more Do-derer's mouthpiece here than is Castiletz, and this should serve as a warning against automatically identifying the author with the views of one of his characters.

Academic critics have, on the whole, been a little more willing than feuilletonistic reviewers to see Mord in a historical light. Ulla Lidén insists: 'Nur im Titel alludiert der Autor auf die gegenwärtige Situation in Deutschland.'<sup>312</sup> For Michael Shaw, on the other hand:

It seems curious that a book which extols the pursuit of individual autonomy which could easily be interpreted as an invitation to rebel against all forms of imposed authority should have been written by a member of this [the Nazi] party, or that such a book should have appeared in 1938. For what I should like to call Conrad's murderous docility and what Doderer calls his 'Mitläufernatur' are so clearly the liability to be transcended.<sup>313</sup>

But because Louison Veik acts in effect as a 'Brückenmensch' (p.188) for

Castiletz, since her life appears to be the sacrifice necessary before Conrad can find his true self, Shaw accuses Doderer of an elitist attitude whereby a select few are favoured at the expense of the masses. 'It is not difficult to see the sources and implications of such a ruthlessly "aristocratic" view',<sup>314</sup> he concludes. Nevertheless, Shaw interprets Conrad's death as a mitigation of the brutality of such a view, as poetic justice, since, having 'walked over a corpse',<sup>315</sup> Castiletz does not live to enjoy the fruits of his endeavour. Schröder, too, insists: 'die "edlen" Figuren Casteletz und Hohenlocher sind abgehoben von "minderwertigen" Figuren wie Henry Peitz und Botulitzky.'<sup>316</sup> Barker, on the other hand, is more convincing when he maintains that the very title of the novel 'surely makes plain Doderer's belief that the events portrayed in his novel are valid for all men and not merely for a select few'.<sup>317</sup>

More significantly, from the point of view of the detective element in Mord, Margaret Contini suggests that Doderer interrupted his work on Die Dämonen to turn his attention to 'lavori minori, meno "pericolosi"',<sup>318</sup> - Mord and Ein Umweg. An American reviewer of the English translation of Doderer's novel, Claude Hill, is more explicit: 'Other imponderables must be weighed, too, and it might very well be that the author found it politically more expedient to operate behind the safe veil of a detective story in 1938.'<sup>319</sup> It is, however, ironic that Hill, the only critic of Mord who attempts to relate the detective element in the novel to the political climate in which it was first published, should reveal such a signal lack of awareness of the attitude of successive totalitarian regimes to the detective novel. For, as Howard Haycraft points out:

a few months before the outbreak of the Second World War, press dispatches from totalitarian Italy announced to the outside world that the works of Agatha Christie and Edgar Wallace, the two English detective story writers most popular in Italian



translation, had been banned from the country by decree of the Fascist party. No reason was stated for the decision. But early in 1941 a more explicit action was reported from the Third Reich, where the Nazi party ordered the withdrawal of all imported detective fiction from German bookshops. As spokesman for the party line, the Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung was quoted in angry denunciation of this 'illegitimate offspring' of English literature. Detective stories, the newspaper thundered, were nothing but 'pure liberalism', designed to 'stuff the heads of German readers with foreign ideas'.<sup>320</sup>

A cursory glance at the Liste der für Jugendliche und Büchereien ungeeigneten Druckschriften,<sup>321</sup> published by the 'Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, Abteilung Schrifttum', reveals that as early as October 1940 such detective stories as Agatha Christie's The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, The Murder on the Links, Why didn't they ask Evans? and Death in the Air,<sup>322</sup> along with many 'Wild-West-Romane' were denounced as 'schädlich' and 'unerwünscht'.<sup>323</sup> The President of the 'Reichschrifttumskammer', Hanns Johst, proclaimed in the foreword:

Solche Schriften dürfen

1. nicht in Schaufenstern und allgemein zugänglichen Bücherständen öffentlich ausgelegt werden;
2. nicht durch Reisende, Bücherkarrenhändler, Ausstellungshändler und sonstige Händler ohne festen Verkaufsraum vertrieben werden;
3. nicht in Leihbüchereien, Volksbüchereien, Vereins-, Betriebs-, Werk-, Hotel-, Krankenhaus-, Schiffs-, und ähnlichen Büchereien verliehen, vermietet, veräußert oder vorrätig gehalten werden;
4. nicht an Jugendliche unter achtzehn Jahren ausgehändigt werden.<sup>324</sup>

It is, of course, no coincidence that the detective novel was scorned by the Nazis, for the figure of the eccentric, intellectual amateur sleuth

operating outside and, more often than not, in opposition to the official guardians of law and order was inconceivable in a police state, even as a character in a novel. There is simply no place in a totalitarian state for uncovering hidden truths, for demonstrating paradigmatically the value of rational deduction or for revealing the inadequacies of the institutionalized authorities. Writing in 1942, Haycraft insisted: 'obviously no literary form so irrevocably wedded to the exercise of reason as the detective novel could conceivably be welcomed by predatory hegemonies, dependent on uncritical acceptance of propaganda for their very survival. The fuehrer principle and logical thought are simply no more compatible than oil and water.'<sup>325</sup> With not a little self-righteousness, Haycraft declared that 'detection and the detective story definitely thrive in proportion to the strength of the democratic tradition and the essential decency of nations; while the closer governments approach to legalized gangsterism and rule-by-force, the less likely we are to find conscientious crime investigation or any body of competent detective literature.'<sup>326</sup> In the same year, 1942, Nicholas Blake suggested that the Nazis banned detective fiction since 'a people whose bloodlust was sublimated by reading and writing fiction murders would certainly have less zest for murdering real Poles'.<sup>327</sup> And Richard Armour was even moved to verse by the Italian restrictions on crime novels:

In the land of Mussolini  
They are viewing with alarm:  
The authorities are spleeny  
When they think how great the harm

To the dormant cerebrations  
Of impressionable youths,  
Should the ratiocinations  
Of detective-story sleuths

Interfere, despite hood winking  
Of the best fascistic kind  
And evoke a little thinking  
In the regimented mind.<sup>328</sup>

The theoretical foundations of the Nazi rejection of the detective novel were put a little more subtly by Erich Thier in a paradigmatic study in Nazi propaganda entitled 'Über den Detektivroman', originally published in 1940 in Die Bücherei. Thier sets out to examine a genre which he considers 'unterwertig',<sup>329</sup> per se, and describes the purpose of his study as 'schrifttumspolitisch'.<sup>330</sup> Thier's thesis is: 'Der Detektivroman ... in seiner bisherigen Gestalt ist ein spezifisches Erzeugnis der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, kapitalistischer, westlicher und vor allem angelsächsischer Prägung. Wie er Erzeugnis dieser Gesellschaft ist, so übernimmt er in ihrer Wächterfunktion von ihr eigentümlichen Interessenbereichen. Der Einbruch des D[etektiv]-Romans in Deutschland ist daher dem Einbruch eines fremden Geistes weithin vergleichbar.'<sup>331</sup>

Thier argues that because the ideological basis of the detective novel is conservative - the detective intervenes to restore order and thus perpetuate a threatened society - detective fiction is nothing less than an 'Apologie des Kapitalismus ... Es gibt keinen sozialistischen Detektivroman!'<sup>332</sup> Moreover, because the reader himself is invited to act as a detective, he becomes a 'knight' who is called upon to intervene on behalf of bourgeois society.<sup>333</sup> Thier says of the ratiocinative skills of the great detective:

Es handelt sich ... um eine Arbeitsweise und um zugehörige Überzeugungen logischer und metaphysischer Art, die für eine ganz spezifische und für die bürgerlich-kapitalistische Gesellschaft sehr aufschlußreiche Denkart kennzeichnend sind. Gemeint ist die positivistische. Das Vorgehen des Detektivs ist

tatsächlich dem in der Soziologie Comtes oder dem in der Philosophie Machs ... vergleichbar. ... Die Beziehung des D[etektiv]-Romans ... zur positivistischen Wissenschaft deutet nun wieder auf innere Verwandtschaft mit dem Geist der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft hin.<sup>334</sup>

Predictably, Thier insists that the positivistic way of thinking is not the form favoured by the Nazis.<sup>335</sup> Rational, analytical thought is not, however, rejected outright, merely restricted to what Thier considers its appropriate place: 'Sie [die Analyse] ist in Chemie, Technik usw. als Arbeitsmethode nach wie vor höchst bedeutsam, aber sie ist nicht mehr Schlüssel der Welt.'<sup>336</sup> Thier's own convictions are clearly anything but rational in nature: 'Der wirkliche Führer, der im Volke steht und dessen Wesen und Willen verkörpert, handelt aus schicksalhafter Notwendigkeit heraus.'<sup>337</sup>

In the face of a 'Flut angelsächsischer Übersetzungen',<sup>338</sup> of detective novels which is threatening to take over the German market entirely, Thier warns 'daß auch auf dem literarischen Feld zu überwinden ist, was im politischen Raum des Volkes bereits nicht mehr besteht'.<sup>339</sup> Thier lauds the policy adopted by the 'Volksbücherei' of resisting the influx of 'Anglo-Saxon' detective fiction: 'Sie [die Volksbücherei] hat damit zu ihrem Teil den Einbruch westlichen Geistes abgewehrt.'<sup>340</sup>

The classical detective novel was, then, evidently anything but a 'safe veil' (Hill) behind which to operate in 1938. Yet what those critics such as Peter Alexander Batke who maintain that Doderer's novel is a 'psychological detective story with close affinity to best sellers of the time',<sup>341</sup> fail to realize is that Mord is in almost every aspect the very antithesis of the classical detective story. Perhaps the most important part of Thier's didactic monograph from our point of view is his reaction to any attempt to escape from the straitjacket of the traditional con-

ventions of the detective novel. He is particularly impressed by Chesterton's 'Father Brown' stories, in which more emphasis is placed on intuition than on reason, by the concentration on the psychological rather than the puzzle element in Ricarda Huch's Der Fall Deruga, and by the introduction of 'Schicksal' into the detective novel by Joachim Maaß in Ein Testament. There is no need to emphasize that Doderer's novel exhibits an uncanny resemblance to the demands the Nazi theorist formulated some two years after its publication. Are we, therefore, to assume that the detective, or rather anti-detective element in Mord is evidence that the author was 'gleichgeschaltet'? Are we to interpret Doderer's total rejection of the traditional superiority of the ratio as a convenient manoeuvre to placate the censor? Are we to accept Schröder's view that the irrationality of Doderer's conception of 'fatology' as expressed in Mord is an indirect reflection of the author's latent fascism?

The vexed question of Doderer's ambivalent allegiance to the Nazi party has troubled generations of Doderer scholars. A mere glance at the author's reception suffices to confirm Schröder's contention that critics and acquaintances of Doderer have, on the whole, done their best hitherto either to ignore or to play down the author's membership of the Nazi party.<sup>342</sup> Eduard Swoboda's claim that Doderer's one-time Nazism was an 'ephemerer politischer Irrtum',<sup>343</sup> is characteristic of the attempts by well-meaning critics to find an easy answer to the author's association with the Nazis. Thus M. Deen Larsen talks of Doderer's 'rather academic membership in the party',<sup>344</sup> while Ivar Ivask insists that this membership lasted 'only five years and actually still less'.<sup>345</sup> Alexander Novotny takes the attempts to 'whitewash' Doderer one step further by suggesting that the author was taken in by the Nazi ideology from 'etwa 1932 bis 1936 und nicht länger (!)',<sup>346</sup> and Michael Horowitz, in his recent 'attempt at a biography' of Doderer, even goes so far as to assert: 'Tat-

sächlich fühlt sich Doderer schon im Herbst 1934, ein Jahr nach seinem Parteibeitritt, als ein "Abseitsstehender".<sup>347</sup> Finally, Hans Flesch-Brunningen provides us with a paradigmatic example of the critics' attempts to rehabilitate the author and to minimize the significance of his 'Nazi-Episode':

Doderer war früher als alle anderen Mitläufer vom Nationalsozialismus enttäuscht und angeekelt.

...

[In Dachau] hörte er ... am Wirtshaustisch nebenan, wie sich Wachmannschaften des Lagers ihrer Übeltaten rühmten; wie der Notar der Stadt, ins Lager berufen, neben ihm öfters seufzte: 'Jetzt muß ich wieder in die Hölle ...'

...

Von allem Anfang an versuchte der Autor seine Geschwister von der bösen Sinnlosigkeit der kriegsbereitenden neuen Bewegung zu überzeugen ... Er hat zwischen 1938 und Kriegsausbruch zahlreiche jüdische Freunde rechtzeitig zu warnen vermocht ... Im besetzten Frankreich unterstützte er, wo er konnte, Österreicher und Franzosen, mit denen er Fühlung nahm ...<sup>348</sup>

Although Doderer had long since rejected the Nazi ideology, Flesch-Brunningen assures us, immediately after his return from a Norwegian POW camp, the novelist reported to the Viennese authorities that he had been a member of the Nazi party, to which the astonished official replied: 'Sie waren offenbar der einzige Nazi in Wien.'<sup>349</sup>

In his published diaries, Doderer himself is at great pains to point out that he soon realized his 'theoretical' mistake<sup>350</sup> in confusing Nazism with the advent of a new 'Römisches Reich',<sup>351</sup> an explanation readily accepted by most critics. Doderer also insists that he was disillusioned by Nazism as early as the beginning of 1937.<sup>352</sup> Moreover, the author's

published journals reveal that he was acutely aware of the dangers of an association of his works with Nazism. In June 1942 Doderer quotes a newspaper report according to which children in Almelo in Holland had, while looking for peewits' eggs, found a stuffed cow in a field. Thieves had slaughtered and skinned the animal with great expertise and had then stuffed the cow and returned it to the meadow. Doderer comments:

Scheint bedenklich. Denn eine Zeit lang genügte eben doch die präparierte Kuh, sie hielt vor, und es mußten erst einige Kiebitze, die zugesehen hatten, ihre Eier legen, um den wahren Sachverhalt an den Tag zu bringen. Sonsten hätt' es wohl noch länger angestanden. So weitgehend hing die Sache von Kiebitzen ab! Ich bin entschlossen, von heute an bei jedem Ding mich erst zu überzeugen ... denn anders könnte mir ja geschehen, daß ich etwa meine Eier in die Atrappe eines Nestes lege, in einen ausgestopften Verlag oder mitten in eine längst präparierte Literatur hinein!<sup>353</sup>

Despite the fact that Doderer's publisher, Heinrich Beck, had joined the Nazi party in 1937,<sup>354</sup> Doderer was convinced that his novels did not serve the purposes of the Nazi ideologues. In accordance with his highly irrational conception of the Second World War as primarily a 'sprachliche Katastrophe',<sup>355</sup> Doderer observed in May 1945: 'Gut getroffen! Heute nacht ist die deutsche "Frontbuchhandlung" - also eine Buchhandlung, in der bestimmt keines meiner Bücher je zu haben gewesen ist! - demoliert worden. Man möchte fast meinen: feiner Instinkt der Osloer, auf's Wesentliche gerichteter Instinkt, der die Sachen an der Wurzel packen will ... es wurden fast alle deutschen Propagandaschaufenster zerstört.'<sup>356</sup> Accepting Gütersloh's definition of 'Schrifttum' as 'eine unerlaubte Vereinfachung der Welt, in der man wie sie ist, nämlich komplex, nicht zu leben vermag',<sup>357</sup> Doderer insisted, with characteristic irrationality, that the sort of

writing demanded by the Nazis was a 'Terrain, das andauernd üblen Geruch entsendet hat, also ungefähr die profundeste Art von Störung, welche es überhaupt geben kann'.<sup>358</sup> In retrospect, Doderer was convinced that it was his own writing that saved him from the evils of Nazism:

Der Schriftsteller in mir blieb intakt. Er konnte eine falsche, zweite Sprachlichkeit nicht hervorbringen. Die siebenhundert ersten Textseiten der Dämonen, welche ich damals verfaßte, bestehen heute noch [June 1946] die Prüfung durch ihren Autor: vielfach als verfehlt oder technisch oder psychologisch oder sonstwie unzureichend erkannt, immer jedoch agnosziert als - geschrieben. Dieses Schreiben war anscheinend das einzige in mir, das sich unter die Planungen, Zielsetzungen und Zwecke der einbrechenden Irrealität nicht beugen ließ und es hat mich in München 1936 auffallend rasch getrennt von Menschenkreisen, die von ihr durchsetzt waren; es ließ falsche Beziehungen garnicht aufkommen, erweckte auf der Gegenseite lebhaftete Antipathie und hat mich davor bewahrt, von ihr zu Tode gefördert zu werden. Im Handumdrehen war ich da Outsider, schneller als ich selbst die Situation erkennen konnte, was freilich auch nicht lange gedauert hat, weil dazu ein halbes Jahr Aufenthaltes bei mir vollends genügte.<sup>359</sup>

Yet there is no denying that the anti-rationalism which pervades Mord complied very closely with the 'allgemeine Rückwendung zum Irrationalen',<sup>360</sup> that characterized the Nazi ideology. On the other hand, the novel is clearly not written in the language of the typical 'Mitläufer' nor could one dare to suggest that it is a typical example of propagandistic 'Blut- und Bodenliteratur'. Moreover, one has the feeling that Doderer would have had to have produced a far more 'direct', much less subtle parody of the detective novel genre to satisfy the Nazi theoreticians, and it is highly illuminating that none of the extant reviews of the 1938 edition of Mord conceive of the novel as a satire on Anglo-Saxon detective fiction.



More to the point, irrationality, belief in Fate, and the rejection of the traditional detective novel schema do not, in themselves, constitute a fascistic ideology. Here the value of the comparison with Dürrenmatt becomes apparent. For while Dürrenmatt's critics object to what they consider his irrationality and superstition, it evidently does not occur to them to ascribe fascistic or neo-Nazi tendencies to the author, not least because there is nothing in the Swiss writer's past or present to motivate or substantiate such claims. It is the unfortunate legacy of Doderer's one-time allegiance to the Nazi party that the critic today feels obliged to look for reflections of the author's Nazism in what is essentially nothing more than a conscious artistic reaction to a literary sub-form whose development has been stunted by the straitjacket of convention.

## XI Conclusion

One does not have to look far to find the reasons why the detective element in Doderer's Mord has received little critical attention hitherto. The strong general, and indeed not unjustified prejudice on the part of academic critics against detective fiction was supported by the prescriptive directive circulated by Doderer's publishers, which no doubt went a long way to determining the widespread view that the crime aspect of Doderer's novel was more or less superfluous or irrelevant. In addition, the image with which the author had become identified in the eyes of critics and readers alike by 1958 obviously precluded an open-minded reading of the reprint of the novel.

It is one of the many ironies of Doderer reception that in the final analysis one must acknowledge that those critics who exhibited a singular reluctance to treat Doderer's novel as a detective novel were perfectly justified, but they were evidently right for the wrong reasons. Those critics who ignored the detective element in Mord or insisted, as Armin Mohler did, that the 'Kriminalien' were 'doch nur der Vorwand ..., um eine "Menschwerdung" vorzuführen',<sup>361</sup> were as misguided as those who tentatively admitted that the work was 'something of a detective novel'. As already suggested, there is nothing accidental or incidental in Doderer's carefully wrought novels, and given the novelist's awareness of the rigid detective novel schema and his resentment of the naive optimistic positivism which is the very basis of the thinking behind the classical detective novel, there is every evidence to suggest that Mord was not only not a detective novel in the ordinary sense of the term, but the very antithesis of the classical model, a quite deliberate parody of a literary genre whose rule-making evidently cut across the grain of the author's conception of art.

The vexed question of whether Doderer wrote his novel as a convenient ploy to placate the Nazi censor or as an artistic reaction to a literary form which peremptorily limits the scope for aesthetic expression, is ultimately a matter for speculation. Yet whilst Doderer's reaction in Mord to the strict conventions of the detective novel accords remarkably closely with the theoretical precepts laid down by the Nazis, it is difficult to disengage oneself from the thought that, had it not been for Doderer's infamous association with the Nazi party, one would be less inclined to see in the author's irrationality something potentially pernicious or essentially fascistic, and more prepared to view in the novel a valid precursor of the modern parodies of the classical detective story by such diverse authors as Camus, Butor, Robbe-Grillet, Borges, Dürren-

matt, Handke and Artmann.

The key to a proper understanding of Doderer's employment in Mord of elements familiar from detective stories is perhaps to be found in an observation the author made in his journal in January 1951: 'Das Strafrecht ist aussichtslos: es erfaßt niemals die wahren Verbrechen, welche in einer so äußersten Stille, Regungslosigkeit und Zurückgezogenheit begangen werden, daß sie wirklich "jenseits der Sehschärfe eines ämtlichen Augs" sich vollziehen.'<sup>362</sup> The very title of Doderer's novel implies that he has set out to present a paradigmatic portrayal of human weakness which is valid for every man. A closer examination of the character constellations in Mord reveals that, with the exception of the model 'father' figure Hohenlocher, every major figure in the novel is guilty of a 'murder' in the sense described above by Doderer. Thus the person whom Conrad 'murders' is not, as is generally held, Louison Veik, but Ida Plangl, a potential disruption of his 'ordered' existence which he heartlessly discards. Similarly, Conrad's father clearly has the death of his young wife on his conscience, while Botulitzky's avarice turns his girlfriend's life into a living hell. Ligharts's willingness to persecute Peitz, a man who has never done anything against him in his life, is a further classic example of the murderous potential present in all of us. Frau Schubert's selfishness is, of course, directly responsible for Castiletz's untimely death. Finally, even the dead girl Louison Veik is shown to have condemned her own sister, Marianne, to eternal unhappiness over Derainaux. Viewed from this angle, Doderer's deep-rooted scepticism vis-à-vis the institutionalized guardians of 'law and order' becomes comprehensible in all its irrationality, but it would be foolish to pretend that this was essentially 'fascistic' in nature.

There still remains the question of whether Doderer's interpolation of a 'detective element' into what appears to be a conventional 'Ent-

wicklungsroman' is successful. Detective novel theorists emphasize the 'closed' structure of this genre, which precludes an intergration of a detective story into the more 'open-ended' structure of an ordinary novel. Ulrich Suerbaum insists: 'Dieser Strukturblock kann nicht Teil eines größeren Ganzen werden, weil er selbst zu sehr ein Ganzes ist.'<sup>363</sup> And it is Doderer's attempt to introduce the detective element into a larger complex that is one of the major weaknesses of the novel. It is because the novelist does not successfully integrate the detective element into the aesthetic whole that the 'Kriminalgeschichte' seems at first sight to Anton Reininger to be 'ein künstlich angeklebtes Nachspiel'.<sup>364</sup> For the same reason Claus Hubalek, who adapted the novel for television, came to the conclusion that Mord was in fact a composite of two quite distinct elements, a novel (the long introduction) and a 'novella' (composed around an 'ungewöhnliches Ereignis', the 'murder').<sup>365</sup> One must ultimately agree with Claude Hill that this 'seemingly innocuous tale of mystery and suspense operates on two levels' which are essentially incongruous and incompatible, since 'Dostoevsky and Agatha Christie won't mix'.<sup>366</sup>

One final irony in the reception of Mord seriously undermines not only the frenetic efforts by Doderer's critics to dissociate his novel from run-of-the-mill detective fiction, but even the effectiveness of the normally smooth-running advertising machinery of the publishers. For, despite the constant cries that Doderer's novel is not a 'Kriminalroman', Mord has now found its way into both Ordean A. Hagan's Who Done It? A Guide to Detective, Mystery and Suspense Fiction,<sup>367</sup> and Reclams Kriminalromanführer, where it is described as 'eine Mischung von Entwicklungsroman und Krimi'.<sup>368</sup> It is perhaps worth pointing out that, in the same publication, Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment and Brothers Karamazov are described, in contrast to Doderer's Mord, as 'weit mehr als Krimi'.<sup>369</sup>

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## EXCURSUS: DODERER'S NOVEL ON TELEVISION

### I Introduction

As early as 1936, while still struggling to find a publisher in Germany, Doderer informed Gütersloh in a letter of how he had sent the manuscript of his novel Ein Umweg to the Verlag Fischer & Bermann. This book, Doderer wrote, 'repräsentiert mich, und ist zugleich verfilmbar. Die Verfilmung bedeutet viel, für Verlag und Autor.'<sup>1</sup> However, despite his spectacular rise to fame in the 1950s with Die Strudlhofstiege and Die Dämonen, Doderer did not live to see any of his novels filmed. Plans for screen versions of both Die Strudlhofstiege and Die Wasserfälle von Slunj came to nothing.<sup>2</sup> Admittedly, the ORF did transmit a film on Doderer as early as 1963, in which pictures by Franz Hubmann complemented readings from Doderer's works.<sup>3</sup> However, it was not until ten years after the author's death that Wolfgang Fleischer's film on Doderer's life and works was broadcast, an undertaking consciously aimed at making Doderer

known to a wider audience.<sup>4</sup> Fleischer's 1980 film 'Die Strudelhofstiege' [sic],<sup>5</sup> on the other hand, was part of a series entitled 'Schauplätze der Weltliteratur', inspired by Dietmar Grieser's book of the same title,<sup>6</sup> and was solely intended to show Doderer readers some of the localities familiar from his novels,<sup>7</sup> although it did include a highly melodramatic reconstruction of the 'Skandal' on the Strudlhofstiege.

The celebrated avant-garde film-maker Ernst Schmidt junior had completed the manuscript of his adaptation of Doderer's Die Merowinger as early as 1979, but was unable to obtain the necessary subsidies from the Viennese authorities, not least, Michael Prager assures us, because of the unconventionality of the project.<sup>8</sup> It was not until 1982 that Schmidt's film finally reached the cinemas. Thus it was left to Claus Hubalek to present the first full-length Doderer novel via the film medium, thereby providing the novelist with a unique, if somewhat belated opportunity of becoming a household name to a mass television audience, but at the same time running the risk of being judged according to the same criteria as run-of-the-mill television soap operas. Hubalek's adaptation of Doderer's Mord was first screened by the ZDF in August 1979,<sup>9</sup> a fact which appears to have injured the pride of more than one patriotic Austrian television critic. The anonymous author of a preview of Hubalek's adaptation writes in the Neues Volksblatt: 'Der ORF scheint zwar als Ko-produktionspartner auf, aber als völlig passiver - die Verfilmung dieses Romans eines der größten österreichischen Schriftsteller dieses Jahrhunderts besorgten die Deutschen praktisch allein. Beim ORF hieß es: "Wir sind eine kleine Anstalt, wir können nicht alles machen, was wir gerne machen möchten."' <sup>10</sup>

After comparing the contents of the play with the original text, we shall examine the critical response to Hubalek's play before asking whether an adaptation for television is, in the final analysis, beneficial or

detrimental to the author's reputation and whether Hubalek's version of Doderer's novel is likely to have encouraged viewers to read the novel.

## II Hubalek's Adaptation: Variations and Omissions

Even before Hubalek's play had been shown, Armin Mohler, one of Doderer's most discerning critics, was quick to warn of the hazards of such an undertaking: 'Wie soll ein Fernsehfilm, sei er noch so raffiniert, eine so subtil aufgebaute Welt in einem Streifen von anderthalb Stunden wiedergeben?'<sup>11</sup> Mohler suggested that the film-makers would have little option but to concentrate on the 'handfeste Krimi-Story' and the 'Ausmalung der sozialen Szenerie des Fabrikantenmilieus'.<sup>12</sup> Mohler's fears were, of course, well-founded, as he was no doubt familiar with Hubalek's explanation in the official press release of why he had chosen to omit virtually the whole of the first part of the novel:

Den Beginn dieser Arbeit markierte ein wohl schmerzlicher, aber, wie uns schien, durchaus notwendiger Verlust: Doderers 1938 erschienenen Erstling ... anlässlich der Fernsehadaptation um ein gutes Drittel zu 'kappen', genauer gesagt, ihn seines enorm umfangreichen Anfangs zu berauben. Nicht etwa, wie man vielleicht vermutet, damit der epische Stoff in irgendein filmisches Prokrustesbett passe, sondern weil sich in uns der Eindruck immer mehr verfestigte, es bei diesem Roman eigentlich mit zwei Romanen zu tun zu haben. Oder noch präziser ausgedrückt: mit einem Roman, dem langen Anfang, und mit einer Novelle, dem Hauptteil des Buchs ...<sup>13</sup>

The film editor, Wolfgang Baecker, was equally convinced that the first part of the novel was unnecessary for the film, 'weil die Figur [Castiletz] im zweiten Teil noch einmal ganz erklärt wird'.<sup>14</sup>

Nonetheless, the overriding impression anyone familiar with Doderer's novel is left with after watching Hubalek's play is undoubtedly that the producers have done their level best to do justice and to adhere as closely as possible to the original. Yet a closer comparison with the text reveals a number of striking and at times disturbing innovations in the play. Hubalek's adaptation opens with the one striking incident in Conrad's adolescence that cannot be omitted - the 'murder' of Louison Veik. The main variation from the original appears at first sight to be quite trivial. Doderer writes: 'Nebenan, hieß es, fährt eine allein.'<sup>15</sup> Consequently, after carrying out the ill-fated prank, Castiletz asks: 'Hat sie nicht geschrien?' (p.61). In the play, on the other hand, one of the young men declares: 'Nebenan fährt jemand allein',<sup>16</sup> and, after the incident in the tunnel, Conrad merely asks: 'Hat nicht jemand geschrien?.' This apparently minor alteration is a harbinger of a whole series of variations that are calculated, so it would seem, to invest the play with a greater sense of mystery and suspense than is to be found in the novel. Thus the following key passage from Hohenlocher's description of Louison's death is omitted: 'Sie ist viel gereist, zu Verwandten hier in Deutschland, auch auswärts, ... Sie soll stets außerordentlich unvorsichtig gewesen sein, spielte mit den Ringen herum, womöglich in Gegenwart Fremder, im Hotel oder im Zuge ...' (p.127). Thus the viewer of the play at this point knows neither that it was a woman who was travelling in the compartment next to Castiletz, nor that Louison Veik died on a train. This apparent attempt to withhold vital information from the viewer is sustained in the omission of the letter from Castiletz senior informing Conrad exactly when Louison died (p.142). Even more striking is the omission



of the following short but crucial passage from Marianne's description of the murder of her sister: '... dies geschah in der Eisenbahn, und zwar bei Nacht' (p.172). It is as if Hubalek does not wish to evoke too frequently the striking opening scene of the play, as this would evidently destroy the element of suspense so vital to the visual medium. Thus, when Inkrat is recounting the exact details of the murder, the following lines, among other less significant passages, are omitted: 'Einen Schrei oder ein verdächtiges Geräusch hatte niemand gehört, weder ein Fahrgast noch jemand von dem Personal. Die Nachbarn des Fräulein Veik waren mehrere junge Leute, die tranken und lachten; diese fahren nicht weit, um Mitternacht etwa waren alle ausgestiegen, ...' (p.217). One can only assume that this passage would have made all too obvious the identity of the 'murderer'.

Whereas in the novel it is only on his second visit to his aunt's that Castiletz can bring himself to inquire as to the exact date of his departure in 1921 (pp.276-279), Hubalek chooses to append the second visit to the first for the film version. By thus transposing the second meeting with Frau von Spresse, Hubalek totally transforms the carefully constructed sequence of events. More to the point, since in the play Conrad asks about his train journey in 1921 even before he has gone to Stuttgart and Lauffen, his actions there appear far more premeditated than they do in the original, and the essentially irrational basis of Castiletz's success as a 'detective' is undermined. At the same time, the atmosphere of mystery and suspense which Hubalek seems determined to create is heightened when Frau von Spresse's question as to why Conrad is so interested in the train journey in 1921 is met by a stony silence from her nephew. In the novel, in sharp contrast, Castiletz asserts: 'Wenn ich in der Nacht vom 24. auf den 25. Juli im Schnellzuge zwischen Stuttgart und Lauda fuhr, da kann es sein, daß ich mich in dem gleichen

Eisenbahnzuge befand, in welchem damals Louison Veik ermordet wurde' (p.278). His aunt's reply is also omitted in the play: 'Ja, ... ich dacht' es auch oft. Aber was hat das schließlich zu sagen. Außerdem geschah diese Untat auf einem viel späteren Teil der Strecke, so viel ich weiß. Nun, ein Zufall' (p.278). Once again it would appear that Hubalek is attempting to emphasize the mystery element by being deliberately oblique.

Yet if such omissions and innovations give the impression that the film-makers are concerned to dramatize the story and increase the suspense - a quite legitimate and understandable contrivance in a television play - certain other alterations totally contradict this. For instance, Hubalek adds the following passage to the conversation between Castiletz and Maria Rosanka:

Conrad, langsam: 'Sie sagten, gnädige Frau, Louison habe Sie schon eine Viertelstunde vor Abgang des Zuges vom Bahnsteig weggeschickt. Entsinnen Sie sich vielleicht noch der genauen Abfahrtszeit des Zuges?'

Rosanka, wieder leicht und flüssig: 'Ich habe ihn oft selbst benutzt. Es war der Nachtschnellzug, der Stuttgart um halb zehn Uhr verließ und über Mergentheim nach Erfurt und weiter nach Berlin fuhr.'

The effects of such an interpolation are threefold. First, the words spoken earlier by Frau von Spresse are evoked: '... und weiter um halb zehn mit dem Nachtschnellzug nach Mergentheim' - another of Hubalek's own additions. Furthermore, the interpolated scene is far more explicit than the original, and thus has entirely the opposite effect to those omissions already listed, since it can only decrease the suspense. Finally, and most significantly, it totally undermines Doderer's attempt to emphasize the spontaneous, haphazard, unmethodical nature of Castiletz's investigations, and the very

gradual re-awakening of his memories of the incident on the train. And indeed throughout the play a series of omissions and alterations totally contradict Doderer's endeavours to exemplify his ideology of the futility of any methodical attempts to order the world according to preconceived notions. When in the novel the conversation turns apparently of its own accord to Louison Veik, Castiletz feels 'daß ihm hier bereits etwas nachzulaufen begann, was er bisher stets aufzusuchen getrachtet hatte ...'

(p.207). In the play, however, the scene opens with Inkrat answering a question presumably asked by Castiletz, and the long preceding discussion is omitted. Conrad soon asks Inkrat if it is legally permissible for him to undertake a private investigation of the case. In the original, Castiletz only later visits Inkrat specifically for that purpose. Consequently, it appears in the play as if Castiletz has carefully manipulated the conversation in order to find out as much information as possible to help him with his inquiries.

Similarly, whereas Conrad's decision to go to Stuttgart is in the novel basically a spontaneous reaction to a fortuitous coincidence - meeting Marianne's friends in Venice (p.245) - Hubalek invents a far more mundane and rational motivation for Conrad's actions in the play. It is in direct response to Marianne's claim that she has lost one of the earrings that Conrad declares: 'Demnächst muß ich nach Stuttgart, geschäftlich.' There is a striking parallel between Hubalek's presentation of this incident and his portrayal of Eisenmann's suggestion that Castiletz should go to Berlin. The latter replies excitedly: '"Berlin? Das trifft sich aber gut! Ich wollte nämlich ohnehin nach Berlin fahren." Nach einem schnellen Blick auf Eisenmann. "... einen Jugendfreund besuchen. Günther Ligharts. Er ist beim Auswärtigen Amt".' In complete contrast to this, in Doderer's novel it is only in Berlin that Castiletz, who is flicking through the telephone book, toying with the idea of calling his former tutor, Albert

Lehnder, happens to come across Günther's number: 'Also im Auswärtigen Amt war Günther!' (p.296). On both occasions, what Doderer portrays in the novel as Castiletz's reaction to another in the series of lucky coincidences, appears here to be nothing more than part of a carefully worked-out plan.

We have attempted in Chapter One to interpret Doderer's novel as a conscious parody of the optimistic faith in the omnipotence of the ratio which characterizes the classical detective novel. It is clear from a number of Hubalek's variations that he was totally unaware of the implications of Doderer's consistent ironic reversal of the pattern of the traditional detective story. It is in Hubalek's presentation of the scene in which Conrad finds the ear-ring in the tunnel that we see the most obvious example of a complete contradiction of Doderer's ideology of the 'indirectness' of life. Hubalek adds a scene in which Castiletz says to a hotel porter in Lauffen: 'Besorgen Sie mir bitte ein Kursbuch und eine starke Taschenlampe.' And when Castiletz then arrives at the tunnel, we see him sitting waiting: '... dann blickt er auf seine Uhr und studiert es, und wieder blickt er, kontrollierend, auf seine Uhr.' In the novel, of course, Castiletz is anything but so well equipped and prepared: 'Es galt nun, noch einen ausfahrenden Zug abzuwarten: dann konnte er's wagen' (p.260). The Castiletz of the play goes about his investigation like a professional detective: 'Als aus dem Tunnelmund anschwellender Donner ertönt, macht er einen Zeitvergleich und nickt zufrieden.' Before going into the tunnel, Castiletz again exhibits a thoroughness which is nowhere to be found in the novel: 'Noch einmal zieht Conrad dann Uhr und Kursbuch zu Rate. Schließlich steigt er entschlossen die Böschung herab.' Curiously enough, in spite of these sweeping and totally unjustified alterations, Hubalek still tries to do justice to the original text by having Castiletz declare in his subsequent telephone conversation with Maria Rosanka:

... Gnädige Frau, es war sicher ein Zufall, daß ich im Tunnel den Ohrring fand. Aber ich glaube, sehr oft kommen Verbrechen nur durch solche Zufälle ans Licht. Dabei weiß ich selbst nicht genau, was ich dort im Tunnel eigentlich suchen wollte, nach so vielen Jahren. Es war jedenfalls keine vernünftige Überlegung, nicht das Ergebnis gedanklicher Vorarbeit, eher eine Fülle sonderbarster Vorstellungen.

However, Conrad's words contradict his actions, for Hubalek's arbitrary addition of the scenes with the railway timetable are totally incompatible with Castiletz's assertion that he had not thought out his course of action in advance. More significant even than this addition by Hubalek is the fact that he omits the vital scene in which Conrad's methodical search of the tunnel with the aid of a track walker ends in failure, a scene which is a paradigmatic example of Doderer's doctrine of the futility of man's endeavours to take what the author is convinced only life itself can provide him with.

One can only assume that it was the exigencies of time that forced Hubalek to reduce drastically the episodes with Peitz in Berlin. Whereas in the novel Conrad follows Peitz out to Pankow on no less than three occasions, Hubalek condenses this to one in the play. Moreover, whereas in the original Castiletz twice sees Peitz trying to sell jewellery, which leads to the culmination of the would-be detective's misinterpretation of the facts, Hubalek chooses to omit the whole episode. Once again the ramifications of such an alteration are diverse. It seems extremely odd that, having apparently endeavoured to increase the suspense at the beginning of the play by withholding information from the viewer, Hubalek should now omit the scenes in which the 'red herring' most obviously incriminates himself. Furthermore, and much more importantly, yet another example of the ineffectiveness of Castiletz's conscious attempts at playing the detective as opposed to relying on favourable coincidences - his

second, carefully planned 'shadowing' of Peitz, which ends in failure and frustration - is omitted. Finally, the meeting between Castiletz and Botulitzky on the Berlin underground, implausible enough in the original, seems even more unconvincing here, since Botulitzky just happens to be coming off duty when he first sees Conrad, and is thus able to wait and spot him on his way back from Pankow.

There are a number of other, relatively minor variations. For instance, when Robert Veik is first introduced to Castiletz in the play, Hubalek adds the following direction: 'Sein fröhlicher Gesichtsausdruck verändert sich. An seine Stelle tritt eine Irritation, ja fast ein Erschrecken.' One can only presume that this is because he has recognized the 'physiognomische Verwandschaft' (p.184) between Conrad and Louison. More significantly, Hubalek omits Hohenlocher's prophetic words about Frau Schubert which help prepare the reader for Castiletz's untimely death: 'In Bedarfsfällen pflege ich abends den Hauptgashahn abzuschalten und das davor befindliche Türchen zu versperren' (p.131). Moreover, the chance meeting between Castiletz and Hohenlocher, where the latter warns Conrad that Schubert has become 'schellig' (p.285), is also omitted, as is Castiletz's encounter with a distraught Schubert on the way to Hohenlocher's (p.362). The gas explosion caused by what Doderer would call Schubert's 'deperceptivity', which so many of the critics of the novel have difficulty in interpreting, must strike the viewer of the play as almost incomprehensible.

Although after viewing Hubalek's play one might easily be forgiven for crediting him with 'Doderer-Treue',<sup>17</sup> a detailed comparison of the adaptation with the original reveals a whole series of totally arbitrary alterations which quite simply cut across the grain of the ideology at the basis of Doderer's novel. It is, however, the omission of the psychologically crucial experiences of Conrad's childhood and adolescence that

is the main weakness of the play. Hubalek's belief that Mord can be divided into two distinct parts is a misunderstanding of the cyclical structure of the novel, provoked, perhaps, by Doderer's unhappy marriage of two basically incompatible forms, the 'Entwicklungsroman' and the 'Kriminalroman'. Hubalek does admittedly feel obliged to include the prophetic first sentence of the novel by introducing a scene in which Hohenlocher speaks these words to Castiletz, but this is totally ineffective, since the viewer has not had the chance to observe the psychological basis of Conrad's pedantic obsession with order and his neurotic fear of 'complications'. Similarly, when the Castiletz of the play informs his wife that his childhood was 'alles andere als das, was man heutzutage eine Schülertragödie nennt', the effect is lost on the viewer. By omitting Conrad's experiences with his tyrannical father, the incident where Castiletz kills the snake, and particularly Conrad's love affair with Ida Plangl, Hubalek robs the play of a layer of significance which is vital for a full understanding of Doderer's work.

### III The Critical Response to Hubalek's Play

The reviews of the screening of Hubalek's adaptation of Mord in Germany and later in Austria provide us with an ideal opportunity to obtain an accurate, up-to-date assessment of Doderer's standing in the eyes of the contemporary critic, although it must be acknowledged that these critics are concerned primarily with Hubalek's version of Doderer's novel. Moreover, it is vital to recognize the difference between the book reviewer

and the reviewers of the play. Accustomed to churning out short, snappy reviews of a visual medium within a few hours of its screening, the television critic is equipped with a completely different critical apparatus and cannot be expected to undertake the sort of detailed comparison with the original which we have attempted above. Nor indeed can he even be expected to be familiar with the novel itself. In these circumstances, it is perhaps somewhat surprising that so many reviewers do attempt to relate Hubalek's adaptation to the original text.

One is immediately struck by the almost unanimous rejection of the 'cuts' by those critics who appear to be familiar with Doderer's novel:

Würde man aus einem kunstvoll gewebten persischen Teppich einige Fäden herausziehen und diese dann als Beispiel für die Qualität des Kunstwerks präsentieren, so wären Teppichkenner zu Recht erbost. Autor Claus Hubalek und Regisseur Claus Peter Witt taten eben diesen Tort dem österreichischen Heiligtum Heimito von Doderer an. Sie nahmen den roten Faden aus dem Roman Mord und zeigten verfilmte Literatur. Alle Verschlingungen, die Doderers Webschiffchen im Laufe einer Geschichte nimmt, wurden weggelassen, ...

Für jene Zuseher, die den Roman nicht kannten, Haupt- und Nebenwege nicht schon vorsorglich begangen hatten, blieb überdies Castiletzsches Handeln völlig unverständlich.<sup>18</sup>

Die Literaturverfilmer haben ja allemal mit der Anmaßung zu arbeiten, sie seien klüger als die Autoren, deren Werke sie bearbeiten: Sie erklären - de facto - zum Beispiel einem Herrn Dostojewskij, daß er aus den Brüdern Karamasow recht gut eine mittelkurze Novelle hätte machen können, und sie führen sogar vor, wie das geht (im Grunde ist ja eine Verfilmung nicht mehr als das Gerippe des Stoffs); und so war es auch mit Doderers Mord ... Was da alles im Film nicht vorkam! Und Doderer war gewiß kein Zeilenschinder, der halt so umfangreich drauflos schrieb, um ein möglichst dickes Buch zusammenzukriegen. Da ist



eben jedes Wort an seinem richtigen Platz, ...<sup>19</sup>

So lückenhaft, psychologisch brüchig und kunstgewerblich anspruchsvoll in den äußeren Mitteln wie seine Verfilmung durch Claus Hubalek und Claus Peter Witt ist Heimito von Doderers Roman-Erstling Mord noch lange nicht.

Nimmt man freilich der existentiellen Entwicklung eines jungen Menschen das Fundament von Kindheit und Freundeskreis, reduziert man die sorgsam geschilderten Figuren einer Erzählung auf ihre rein literarischen und keineswegs sprechbaren Selbstäußerungen in Monologform so kommt eben, wie hier, ein peinliches Gemisch aus Brutal-Mythos, Kurzstrecken-Sex, Naiv-Krimi, Psycho-Thriller und Bieder-Moral heraus.<sup>20</sup>

Zwar haben Hubalek und Witt die Sprache des Romans uns vorgeführt, diese Will-sagen- und Ich-wär's-zufrieden-Sprache mit ihren zeitbezeichnenden Wunderlichkeiten (der Fernglasbewahrte guckt durch 'das Zeiss', und der Mann im Auto ist dessen Lenker), nicht aber haben sie bestehen lassen das narrative 'Klima' des Romans, seine Komplexität.<sup>21</sup>

Aber diese Doderer-Treue war nur möglich durch enorme Zusammenstreichungen. So hat der Zuschauer, der Doderers Erstlingsroman kennt, immer wieder Anstöße erhalten, die den Roman in seine Erinnerung zurückholten. Für denjenigen aber, der das Buch nicht kennt, blieb der Film wohl auf weiten Strecken ein Mosaik von faszinierenden, aber unverständlichen Andeutungen, und der Autor Doderer wirkte in diesem Medium wohl arroganter und morbider als in der gemächlich fließenden Buchprosa.<sup>22</sup>

Dies war ein Paradebeispiel für mißglückte Literatur-Verfilmung: in Heimito von Doderers Roman ... geht es nur vordergründig um die Aufklärung eines Mordes, eigentlich aber um die zwanghafte Verstrickung von Schuld und Schicksal ... Die Dialoge waren so, wie sich Romanfiguren eben unterhalten, die ganze Atmosphäre wirkte steif und steril. Ein Mord, den das Fernsehen an Literatur begeht - aber perfekt.<sup>23</sup>

By totally ignoring the first half of the novel, Hubalek necessarily overemphasized the 'murder story', and this was immediately recognized by the critics:

Die Grenzen, die der Verfilmung von Werken der Literatur selbst bei ernstem Bemühen gesetzt sind, machte dieser Fernsehfilm nach Heimito von Doderers Roman deutlich. Claus Hubalek hatte sich redlich bemüht, das Grundmotiv des österreichischen Dichters - das Grauen vor dem Einbruch des Dämonischen in unsere scheinbar nur von der Ratio gelenkte Welt der Massen und ihrer Technik - deutlich zu machen. Regisseur Claus Peter Witt setzte es auch in durchaus angemessene Bilder um. Was jedoch trotz ihres Könnens herauskam, war nicht wesentlich mehr als ein höchst verwickelter Kriminalfilm mit unwirklich manieristischer Sprache und dem überraschenden Ausgang, ...<sup>24</sup>

Daß man hier einen dramatisierten Heimito von Doderer erleben würde, glaubte wohl kein Kenner des literarischen Werkes dieses ... bedeutenden zeitgenössischen österreichischen Erzählers. Seine subtilen Geschichten von der dämonischen Getriebenheit und der Schicksalsverflochtenheit des Menschen, der zu sich selbst zu finden versucht, verfügen über eine eigenartige innere Spannung, die kaum in ein Drehbuch und einen Film umzumünzen ist. So blieb denn auch bei TV-Autor Claus Hubalek zusammen mit Regisseur Claus Peter Witt nichts als eine recht mysteriöse Kriminalstory übrig.<sup>25</sup>

Im Fernsehspiel allerdings, das Claus Hubalek und Claus Peter Witt aus dem Romanstoff zu gewinnen hofften, tritt die kriminalistische Recherche allzu massiv in den Vordergrund ...<sup>26</sup>

Yet, since the television screen is populated nowadays to a large extent by murderers, robbers and police inspectors, it is perhaps no coincidence that the only novel of Doderer's hitherto adapted for television should be one with a 'handfeste Krimi-Story'.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, even if the crime

element in Doderer's novel was one of the main considerations in the selection of Mord as 'appropriate' for the screen, the film-makers' treatment of this element in no way corresponded with the stereotyped schema familiar from the serialized television 'Krimi'. Unfortunately, nor did the film-makers succeed in capturing the very essence of Doderer's parody of the detective genre, so that the critics' response to the detective element in Hubalek's play corresponded uncannily closely to that of the reviewers of the novel in 1958:

Der Titel läßt auf einen Krimi schließen ... Dennoch ist der heute ausgestrahlte Fernsehfilm ... weit davon entfernt, ein bloßes Kriminalstück zu sein.<sup>28</sup>

Seit Inkrafttreten des neuen Programmschemas ist der Sonntagabend in FS1 [channel one of Austrian television] der Oper, dem Theater oder Musical gewidmet. Im 'Zweier' klären dafür die diversen 'Tatort'-Kommissare mehr oder minder geschickt ihre Mordrätsel. Diesmal herrscht Krimistimmung im Einser-Kanal: Mord. Das aber ist natürlich kein gewöhnlicher Krimi ...<sup>29</sup>

Mord ist kein gewöhnlicher TV-Krimi. Dafür sorgt schon der Name des Autors: Heimito von Doderer ...<sup>30</sup>

Ein Kriminalfilm herkömmlicher Machart war Claus Hubaleks Fernsehfilm nach einem Roman von Doderer zum Glück nicht; durfte es auch nicht werden, weil die Intentionen des Autors der Selbstfindung seines Helden galten.<sup>31</sup>

Eigentlich war es kein Krimi, trotz der Toten, trotz der Detektivarbeit des Hauptdarstellers ...<sup>32</sup>

It is difficult to disengage oneself from the impression that, in the light of the prefigurative title - and here we see the dangers in using a mass medium such as television, with its own laws and ability to arouse expectations - several million viewers must have been extremely disappointed at not being served up a conventional 'Krimi'. This is reflected in many of

the reviews:

Der Titel führte auf eine falsche Spur: Der Mord, den jeder begeht [sic] ... war keineswegs der übliche Krimireißer nach deutschem oder amerikanischem Serienschema.<sup>33</sup>

Der Titel klang stark nach Krimi und konnte deshalb vielleicht falsche Erwartungen wecken. Es ging zwar darum, einen Mord aufzuklären, aber letztlich war das nur eine Nebensache ...<sup>34</sup>

Kaum je wurde bei einem Ermittlungs- und Enthüllungskrimi so literarisch gesprochen.<sup>35</sup>

Man fühlte sich ... verraten in einer gewissen Krimierwartung, obwohl die Verfilmung am Sonntag im Einser gelaufen ist, also zu einem Termin, da normalerweise Kultur läuft. Dem aber entsprach der Film in seiner Monotonie. Man merkte gleich, daß da Literatur läuft.<sup>36</sup>

'Heut gemma Fernsehen [sic]', sagte ein alter Mann zu mir, 'heut is a klasser Tatort oder so was Ähnliches. Der Mord den jeder begeht [sic], haaßt er'.

Der Mann dürfte enttäuscht gewesen sein. Denn Heimito von Doderers 'Krimi' war natürlich alles andere als ein solcher.<sup>37</sup>

... der Krimifreund ist nicht verwöhnt in Sachen Intellekt, ... Es macht freilich Spaß, mal wieder einen Herrn Kommerzienrat zu sehen, aber das Ganze in das übliche Webmuster der Tätersuche einzuordnen, ist schier unmöglich.<sup>38</sup>

Natürlich war's kein Krimi im üblichen Sinn, das schon deshalb, weil nicht der Kommissar die Hauptrolle spielte, sondern der Täter sich selbst entlarvte. Niemand kam ins Gefängnis, und man konnte bei der Handlung wirklich nicht sagen, daß sie sonderlich logisch oder gar wahrscheinlich war. Und Spannung, das wichtigste Krimi-Markenzeichen? Nein, davon war nicht viel zu merken, man war vielleicht interessiert, wie's weitergeht, aber nicht gespannt.

Die Tausenden Fernsehkrimis haben den Publikumsgeschmack in eine bestimmte Richtung gelenkt. So war es nicht ganz leicht, diese Verfilmung zu konsumieren und es war nicht ganz einfach zu verstehen, daß die Selbstfindung der Hauptperson Conrad das wich-

As suggested above, Hubalek's alterations made incidents such as the meeting between Botulitzky and Castiletz in Berlin, or Conrad's death, which are implausible enough in the novel, even less convincing. It was because Hubalek himself failed to recognize the function of the incredible coincidences in the novel - to illuminate the impotence of man's feeble intelligence in the face of the incomprehensible workings of life - that he was unable to present Doderer's consistent use of chance in a convincing way. Not surprisingly, the critics were quick to find fault with the implausibilities and coincidences in the play:

Der 'Mord' selbst stellte sich schließlich als phantastische Zufallskette jenseits aller Glaubwürdigkeit dar ...<sup>40</sup>

Die Zufälle summierten sich in eigentlich unerträglicher Weise ...<sup>41</sup>

Stückweise, endlich aber mit toller Zufallshilfe, hat der verbissene Sucher diese Lösung gefunden ...

Doch ... erweist sich das Ganze als eine arg künstliche Konstruktion: Unwahrscheinliche Fügungen sollen ein philosophisches Schuld-Freiheit-Traktat tragen, das allmenschlich-existentielle Gültigkeit beansprucht ...<sup>42</sup>

Oberflächlich betrachtet, schien der Inhalt - aus unwahrscheinlichen Zufällen lebend - an den Haaren herbeigezogen.<sup>43</sup>

Je näher der Fall aber seiner Lösung rückte und je deutlicher damit die Absicht des Autors wurde, um so mehr störte das konstruierte Patentmuster der Handlung, um so unglaublicher wirkte die von lauter perfekt funktionierenden Zufällen gesteuerte Selbsterkenntnis des Helden.<sup>44</sup>

Daß der Mörder seine Tat ebenso schicksalhaft sühnt, wie er sie beging und daß dies exakt genauso wie in dem Schluß des jüngsten Fassbinder-Films geschieht - eine schon merkwürdige Häufung von Zufällen.<sup>45</sup>

Unverständlich blieb dem TV-Zuschauer, warum Castiletz am Ende bei einer Gasexplosion sterben mußte.<sup>46</sup>

It is perhaps symptomatic of a development in the German attitude towards the Hitler era that, whereas in 1958 almost every critic of Doderer's novel seemed to accept the lack of direct political comment or relevance as a matter of course, reviewers of Hubalek's adaptation expected and demanded a clear-cut political stance:

Als geläuterter Konservativer ist Heimito von Doderer in die Literaturgeschichte eingegangen. Doch kein politischer Anspruch war in der Fernsehfassung seines Romans von 1938 Mord zu entdecken.<sup>47</sup>

... im Falle des Raubmords aus den zwanziger Jahren blieben konkretes Zeitgeschehen, wie Inflation und politische Unsicherheit ausgeblendet. Episodische Szenen in Zimmern und Zügen in einem Land Nirgendwo erschienen heutigen Zuschauern selten nachvollziehbar.<sup>48</sup>

There can be little doubt that the steadily increasing demands for political 'engagement' on the part of German writers have to a large extent determined Doderer's fall from literary grace in recent years.

Finally, it is worth noting that the same polarization of opinion that is the hallmark of Doderer criticism was also apparent in the reviews of Hubalek's play. That the reviewers were not only almost exactly equally divided in their evaluation of the play, but also tended towards either enthusiastic approval or outright rejection would appear to endorse Karl August Horst's contention that there is no such thing as a neutral attitude towards Doderer's work.<sup>49</sup> The following two quotations are paradigmatic examples of this tendency:

Mord ist eines der frühen (fast möchte man sagen, zu frühen) Werken Heimito von Doderers. Seine Vorliebe für psychologische Studien von dämonischer Getriebenheit und zwanghafter Schicksalsverflochtenheit treibt hier noch etwas krause Blüten: Die Getriebenheit wirkt gekünstelt, die Verflochtenheit noch konstruiert. ...

Bis zum gnädigen Ende ..., das den Mörder durch eine Explosion von eventuellen Gewissensbissen befreit, wird der Zuschauer durch Industriellen- und Adelskreisen geschleppt.

Allerlei Symbolisches muß er ertragen ...

Conrad Castiletz' Geschichte wäre besser unverfilmt geblieben.<sup>50</sup>

Ein besonderer Genuß: Doderers geistvoll pointierte, fesselnde kunstvolle Sprache. Glänzend geführte, präzise charakterisierende Schauspieler als Haupt- und Nebenfiguren ...

Alles in allem ein brillantes Fernsehspiel - aus dem Bücherschrank geholt.<sup>51</sup>

#### IV Conclusion

Despite our criticism of Hubalek's alterations of Doderer's text, we must nevertheless acknowledge that he endeavoured to do justice to the author in his film by reproducing the language and atmosphere of the novel. This attempt to capture the essence of Doderer's style was welcomed by Doderer's sister, Astrid von Stummer-Doderer, who talked in a letter to Hubalek of the 'ausgezeichnete Zusammenraffung des Romans'<sup>52</sup> and added: 'Sie können sicherlich ermessen, daß ich diesem Film voll Sorge entgegenschah und seinem Ablauf jetzt mit größter Bewunderung verfolgte!'<sup>53</sup>

It is also worth remembering that novel and film represent different aesthetic genera, and should not be judged according to the same criteria.

The film is an autonomous aesthetic creation in its own right, and it would be wrong to suggest that Hubalek's adaptation was bad as a film simply because it cut out key passages of the novel. Leaving aside Doderer's novel and judging the play on its own merits, one must admit that it was a well-made, if rather ponderous television production. Yet any adaptation of a work of literature simply begs comparison with the original, and this reveals that, in order to capture the uniqueness of Doderer's writing, it is not enough merely to recreate the old-fashioned setting or to reproduce the slightly archaic style by transforming reflective passages into direct speech. Doderer's novels are so resistant to transference into the visual medium for the simple reason that what is most important in these works is invariably invisible, intangible and quite literally unspeakable. Moreover, Hubalek's arbitrary omissions and variations not only reveal that he was unaware of the very essence of the novel - the cyclical structure, the veritable series of 'murders' committed by the various protagonists, and the undeniable parody of the classical detective novel; these alterations also make the film itself even more difficult to understand than the novel.

So much was lost on the way from the book to the screen that it is unlikely that Hubalek's play will have gained new readers for Doderer or have done much to enhance the author's reputation. In the final analysis one must agree with the critic signing himself *gf*, who declares: 'Über weite Passagen freilich noch immer viel brillanter als irgendetwas, aber ein Dienst an Doderer war es wahrscheinlich doch nicht, weil man sich am Schluß des Films fragen mußte: War das alles?'<sup>54</sup>



## Notes

1. Letter to Gütersloh, some time after 27 August 1936 (exact date unknown). Held in Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Series nova 14.073.
2. Professor Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, in conversation, January 1981.
3. Manuscript held by Biederstein Verlag, Munich.
4. Letter from Wolfgang H. Fleischer to author, 18 October 1980.
5. 'Schauplätze der Weltliteratur. Heimito von Doderers "Strudelhofstiege" [sic] in Wien. Film von Wolfgang H. Fleischer', Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (Mainz), 20 July 1980.
6. Dietmar Grieser, Schauplätze der Weltliteratur, paperback edition, München (Goldmann Sachbuch no. 11219), 1979.
7. Letter from Wolfgang H. Fleischer to author, 18 October 1980.
8. Michael Prager, '"Die Wut des Zeitalters ist tief"', Extrablatt (Wien), July-August 1979, pp.74-77 (p.75).
9. 'Ein Mord, den jeder begeht. Nach einem Roman von Heimito von Doderer. Fernsehfilm von Claus Hubalek', Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (Mainz), 5 August 1979. Later also shown on ORF in Austria (20 January 1980, FS1).
10. Anonymous, 'Kriminalfall von Doderer', Neues Volksblatt (Linz), 19 January 1980.
11. Armin Mohler, 'Eines Proust ebenbürtig', Die Welt (Bonn), 4 August 1979.
12. Ibid.
13. Claus Hubalek, 'Ein Mord, den jeder begeht', Das Fernsehspiel im ZDF, no.25, June/July/August 1979, Mainz (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, Informations- und Presseabteilung/ Öffentlichkeitsarbeit), 1979, pp.29-30.
14. Cited by tsch, 'Ein Mord, den jeder begeht - im luftleeren Raum', Münchener Merkur (München), 4/5 August 1979.
15. Heimito von Doderer, Ein Mord den jeder begeht, München (Biederstein), 1958 (first published in 1938), p.59. Further references to this edition are given in brackets after the quotations in the text.
16. 'Ein Mord, den jeder begeht. Nach einem Roman von Heimito von Doderer. Fernsehfilm von Claus Hubalek', op. cit. All references to the play are quotations from the original manuscript, kindly provided by Wolfgang Baecker of the ZDF.
17. Armin Mohler, 'Doderer-Treue beim ZDF', Die Welt (Bonn), 7 August 1979.
18. dr, 'Literatur weihevoll', Die Presse (Wien), 22 January 1980.
19. gf, on Hubalek's play, Neues Volksblatt (Linz), 22 January 1980.
20. Effi Horn, 'Ein peinliches Gemisch aus Brutal-Mythos und Bieder-Moral', Münchener Merkur (München), 7 August 1979.

21. Ska, 'Ein Mord wie jeder andere. Eben nicht!', Stuttgarter Zeitung (Stuttgart), 7 August 1979.
22. Mohler, 'Doderer-Treue beim ZDF', op. cit.
23. radl, 'Tödlich', Nürnberger Nachrichten (Nürnberg), 6 August 1979.
24. go, 'Ein Mord, den jeder begeht', Mannheimer Morgen (Mannheim), 7 August 1979.
25. Anonymous, on Hubalek's play, Südkurier (Konstanz), 7 August 1979.
26. Ska, 'Ein Mord wie jeder andere', op. cit.
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28. tsch, 'Ein Mord, den jeder begeht', op. cit.
29. Gerhart Pistor, 'Ein Krimi, der keiner ist, und 5 Stunden Skilauf', Kurier (Wien), 20 January 1980.
30. Anonymous, 'Ein Krimi nach Doderer', Arbeiter-Zeitung (Wien), 20 January 1980.
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32. Richard Dölle, on Hubalek's play, Recklinghäuser Zeitung (Recklinghausen), 7 August 1979.
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39. Peter Hirsch, on Hubalek's play, Oberösterreichische Nachrichten (Linz), 22 January 1980.
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41. BNB, 'Widersprüche', Frankfurter Rundschau (Frankfurt am Main), 7 August 1979.
42. Schwerter, 'Große Worte, schöne Bilder', op. cit.
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44. Ingrid Uebe, 'Ratlos vor Mord', Hannover'sche Allgemeine Zeitung (Hannover), 7 August 1979.
45. kdh, 'Telegene Selbstverfolgung', Augsburger Allgemeine (Augsburg), 7 August 1979.
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47. Anne Rose Katz, 'Große Gesichter', Süddeutsche Zeitung (München), 7 August 1979.
48. Anonymous, on Hubalek's play, Berliner Morgenpost (Berlin), 7 August 1979.
49. Karl August Horst, 'Ein Muster im Teppich', Neue Zürcher Zeitung (Zürich), 3 September 1966.
50. Ingeborg Fasching, 'Besser unverflimt geblieben', Präsent (Innsbruck), 24 January 1980.
51. Hellmut A. Lange, on Hubalek's play, Wiesbadener Kurier (Wiesbaden), 7 August 1979.
52. Letter from Astrid von Stummer-Doderer to Claus Hubalek, 22 January 1980. Quoted with kind permission of Wolfgang Baecker of the ZDF and of Frau von Stummer-Doderer.
53. Ibid.
54. dr, 'Literatur weihevoll', op. cit.

## II

### 'DIE MEROWINGER' AND THE 'CANONIZATION' OF THE 'VIENNESE' NOVELS

#### I Introduction

Rarely is a more striking disparity to be found in Doderer's life and works than that between the author's own evaluation of Die Merowinger and its critical reception. Herbert Eisenreich informs us in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer of those works which Doderer considered his best: Die Strudlhofstiege, Die Posaunen von Jericho, Die Merowinger and Die Wasserfälle von Slunj.<sup>1</sup> The author himself paints a more detailed picture in Meine 19 Lebensläufe:

Ein scheeler Blick darf nicht fehlen aufs eigene Werk. Als solches bezeichne ich in erster Linie Roman Nr.7, den ersten Teil (Die Wasserfälle von Slunj), ferner Die Merowinger und das Divertimento Die Posaunen von Jericho ... Von meinen Nebenarbeiten erscheint mir ein Roman, welcher Die Dämonen heißt (1956), als relativ gelungen. Ich hoffe innig, noch

eine fünfte Auflage des Romanes Die Merowinger oder die totale Familie zu erleben, und setze deshalb die Vorrede zu dieser Auflage gleich hierher: 'Möge diese fünfte Auflage auch solchen merowingischen Naturen, welche letzte Hemmungen bisher nicht zu überwinden vermochten, zum vollen Durchbruche verhelfen.'<sup>2</sup>

Whether Doderer's somewhat tongue-in-cheek remarks can be taken seriously is debatable, particularly in view of the fact that arguably his best work, Die Strudlhofstiege, does not even merit a mention. Most reviewers of Meine 19 Lebensläufe diplomatically avoid mentioning the author's 'eigenwillige Selbsteinschätzung',<sup>3</sup> but Hilde Spiel finds it 'ein wenig mehr als spaßhaft',<sup>4</sup> Inge Meidinger-Geise suggests that we can at least agree with Doderer's evaluation of Die Wasserfälle von Slunj,<sup>5</sup> while Armin Mohler maintains:

Aber insgeheim ist er [der Leser] sich mit dem Autor einig, daß es einen Kern des Werkes gibt, zu dem alles andere, die Erzählungen, die Gedichte, der Panegyricus auf seinen Lehrmeister Gütersloh ..., die frühen Romane Ein Mord den jeder begeht (1938) und der im Hispano-Barock spielende Ein Umweg (1940) - nur Vorstufe und Vorbereitung ist: das sind die drei 'großen Romane' Die Strudlhofstiege, Die Dämonen, Die Wasserfälle von Slunj und das ihnen parallel laufende, erfrischend 'unprivate' Tagebuch Tangenten (1964).<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, almost immediately after its publication, Die Merowinger was voted 'Buch des Monats' in October 1962 by the Darmstadt jury, but this, too, was a decision which did not go undisputed. Jochen Schmidt, for instance, writes: 'Dem Rezensenten will scheinen, daß dies ein reichlich übereilter Entschluß war und daß die Juroren beim Zeitpunkt ihrer Wahl mit dem Lesen noch nicht über jene ersten 50 oder 100 Seiten des

Buches hinausgediehen waren, nach denen auch beim Unterzeichneten noch das Vergnügen weit überwog.'<sup>7</sup> Ernst Stein observes, 'Es wird mithin seinem [des Romanes] Absatz nicht schaden, wenn man ihn die größte Geschmacklosigkeit des literarischen Jahres nennt!'<sup>8</sup> Yet in order to obtain a balanced picture of the reasons behind the various reactions to Doderer's most controversial work, it is necessary to view its reception in the light of developments since 1956.

As Doderer approached the culmination of his work on his literary odyssey, Die Dämonen, he was, as his diaries reveal, at pains to assure himself that he was on the eve of a new life:

Beginnen, nicht vollenden. (Paradoxe Situation gerade beim Abschluß eines Werks.)<sup>9</sup>

Das Ende des Werks ist der Anfang meines Lebens ... Nun keine Verfassung des Endens und Vollendens, und schon garnicht des Fertig-Werden-Wollens: sondern jetzt erst aufwärts!<sup>10</sup>

Yet occasionally there are hints of a more sombre tone, one familiar from the crisis reflected in Tangenten after Doderer had completed Die Strudlhofstiege:<sup>11</sup>

Endschmerz kommt.<sup>12</sup>

Das Werk, dessen Zustandekommen zuletzt mir unbegreiflich wird, läßt mich zurück, unwissend wie ein Kind.<sup>13</sup>

The reviewer Armin Mohler paints a vivid picture of Doderer in those days:

Keiner, der einmal Abitur gemacht hat, wird das seltsam leere Gefühl nach dem Examen vergessen. Was in den langen Korridoren der Schulhäuser über so viele Jahre hinweg als Tor in

die Freiheit gelockt hatte, erwies sich in der Wirklichkeit als ein recht unbehaglicher Zustand. So sehr man sich auch der Schule erwehrt haben mochte – sie hatte doch bis dahin dem Leben einen Rahmen gegeben; nun saß man wie ein Fisch auf dem Trockenen und mußte die Kiemen zu Lungen umbilden. Ähnlich muß es Heimito von Doderer zu Mute gewesen sein, als er nach der Strudlhofstiege (1951) auch noch die Dämonen (1956) herausgebracht hatte.<sup>14</sup>

Damals war Doderer sechzig Jahre alt. Wer ihn zu jener Zeit traf, war erschrocken. Daß die Welt, an der er sein ganzes Leben durch geschaffen hatte, nun losgelöst von ihm in zwei dicken Wälzern vorlag, hatte ihn wie ein Faustschlag getroffen. Doderer war damals offensichtlich ins Leere gefallen ... Man spürte, daß ihm der Boden unter den Füßen weggezogen war.<sup>15</sup>

Doderer's critics, on the other hand, were more concerned with the question of whether there would be a sequel to Die Dämonen:

Erst am Schluß berichtet Geyrenhoff wieder selbst aus unserer Gegenwart, ... doch bleibt sichtbar, daß zumindest ein weiterer Roman nötig sein wird, um am späteren Schicksal der Hauptpersonen den Geschichtsablauf der dreißiger Jahre zu analysieren. Alle bedeutenden epischen Konzeptionen sind ihrem Wesen nach unabschließbar und streben zum Zyklus.<sup>16</sup>

Beabsichtigt der Dichter – mancherlei deutet darauf hin! – vielleicht noch eine Fortsetzung und Weiterführung seines Werkes zu schreiben? Und besteht dann, wenn dies der Fall sein sollte, für die älteren Leser überhaupt noch die Aussicht, diese Weiterführung auch kennenzulernen?<sup>17</sup>

... [Die Dämonen] a une sorte d'aspect fragmentaire qui appellerait une suite ou un complément.<sup>18</sup>

Kakabsa is one of the less plausible characters, and one would like to ask the author a few questions about his and Mary K.'s future; but perhaps he is going to explore this elsewhere ...<sup>19</sup>

After completing Die Strudlhofstiege, Doderer had, for a while, toyed with the idea of continuing the story of some of the characters.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, even after he had finally forced himself to take up instead the thread of Die Dämonen again, Doderer was still thinking along these lines: 'Es wäre denkbar, Melzer's (und Thea's) Geschichte in den Dämonen weiter zu erzählen und so zu zeigen, in welcher Lage ein zum Spirituellen entschlossener Mensch - der gleichsam auf die richtige Seite gefallen ist - gerät, wenn ihm der konkrete Hebel des Talents dabei fehlt, und seiner Decision die Begabungen nicht einfach folgen.'<sup>21</sup>

A short time afterwards, however, Doderer had not only abandoned this plan, but was at pains to emphasize the independence of the novel he was now working on:

Der Geschichte des Hauses Stangeler und aller Geschichten aus dieser Geschichte bin ich in den Dämonen ledig: damit auch eines wesentlichen Gefahr-Momentes. Die Autarkie der DD [= Die Dämonen] gegenüber der Strudlhofstiege aufrecht zu erhalten, ist ohne besondere Schwierigkeit möglich, da ja die DD - als das ältere Manuscript - von vornherein nie als 'Fortsetzung' veranlagt waren.

In 'Auf offener Strecke' wird ein Bestreben sichtbar, die Stangeler - René, Etelka, und so weiter - sozusagen noch herein zu nehmen. Damals existierte die Strudlhofstiege nicht, und ich hatte auch noch keine Ahnung von ihrer künftigen Existenz. Das oben erwähnte Bestreben hat hier und heute keinen Zielpunkt mehr in der Composition. Es kann fallen gelassen werden. Die Charakteristik René's ist eine hinlängliche. Auch er wird zurücktreten. Melzer kommt überhaupt nur als handlungs-transzendenter, durchaus externer Hintergrunds-Punkt in Frage. Mit Negria ließen sich wohl noch einige Späße treiben [again not taken up in the end]. Im ganzen steht die Situation günstig. Die Stiege hat mir die DD gut fundiert und zugleich freie Hand für diesen Roman gegeben ...<sup>22</sup>



Ironically, it was, as Hans Flesch-Brunningen assures us, the total or partial disappearance of some of the characters from Die Strudlhofstiege that readers of Die Dämonen regretted most.<sup>23</sup> Apparently oblivious to the wishes of his readers, Doderer himself insisted after completing Die Dämonen that there was no possibility of a sequel:

Nicht die Überfülle des Neuen, die seit der Endigung des Werks mir hereinbrach, deutet mir am meisten darauf, daß etwas auslief und ein Neues beginnt: sondern der Text am Ende von DD selbst, wo ich allen Figuren den Entlaß und den Abschied für immer gebe: er meldet wörtlich die Wende an. Denn in der Tat wird wohl kaum eine von diesen Figuren mehr durch meine Seiten geistern.<sup>24</sup>

If Doderer found it understandably difficult to take leave of the figures which had preoccupied him for a quarter of a century, then the same can certainly be said of his critics. For they, like the author, were now confronted by a vacuum only partly filled by a number of - in their eyes - minor publications. Doderer's next publication, 'die vom Verlag ... in Frankfurt vorgeschlagene Sammlung der Lyrik'<sup>25</sup> Ein Weg im Dunkeln (1957), was more or less dismissed as 'superfluous',<sup>26</sup> a mere 'Marotte des Meisters':<sup>27</sup>

Daß Heimito von Doderers Bemühen stets mehr auf die Prosa gerichtet war, merkt man auch seinen Gedichten an.<sup>28</sup>

Doderers Begnadung hat sich so ausschließlich auf seine erzählende Prosa konzentriert, daß für die Verse nicht mehr die Qualität übrig bleibt, zu welcher der Autor einer Strudlhofstiege nun einmal verpflichtet ist. Wie wird doch der Verfasser geschmeidiger Prosa holzern, sobald er Gedichte schreibt ... Und wo irgendwo doch etwas vom Doderer der Strudlhofstiege durchschlägt, spürt man bald, daß es sich um versehentlich in Strophenform gesetzte Prosa handelt.<sup>29</sup>

Manche dieser Verse hätten ruhig im Zeilenfluß der Prosa stehen bleiben können. Zu einem eigenen, unverwechselbaren lyrischen Ton finden sie an keiner Stelle ...<sup>30</sup>

Die Sprödeheit, der Wechsel von äußerster Spannung und larmoyanter Langeweile, der andeutende Witz, das Koboldhafte von Blick und Gebärde sind Doderers Stärke - aber sie sind keine Mittel lyrischen Ausdrucks.<sup>31</sup>

Die mittlere Form liegt Doderer nicht. Was er nicht ganz kurz sagen kann, muß er ganz breit ausspinnen, und was sich nicht im Epos ausdrückt, kristallisiert sich im Epigramm.<sup>32</sup>

... oft fragt man sich, ob ein Manuskript nicht besser im Schreibtisch geblieben wäre, das nun in deutlichem Abstand zu den wirklich bedeutenden Leistungen seines Autors ein unnötiges Schattendasein führt ... Derlei gehört bei den Manuskripteingängen literarischer Zeitschriften zur Dutzendware und verfällt, wo literarisches Verantwortungsbewußtsein und guter Geschmack bestimmend sind, ohne Ansehen des Autorennamens der Ablehnung.<sup>33</sup>

Lyrik ist eine unglückliche Liebe Doderers, aber er hätte sich nicht (vom Verlag) verführen lassen sollen, sie preiszugeben! ... Heimlich von Doderers Wege im Dunkeln sind so verschlungen, daß nur das Filigran seiner großen Romane ihr legitimes Zeugnis sind [sic].<sup>34</sup>

Admittedly Doderer's critics cannot be blamed for their dissatisfied reaction to the collection of verse, for lyric poetry was clearly not Doderer's forte. The author himself explicitly describes his ventures into this field as 'eine autobiographische Randnotiz'.<sup>35</sup> One is tempted to agree with Mohler that such a thoughtless publication as a follow-up to Die Dämonen was likely to rob Doderer of much of the credit accrued with the so-called Viennese novels, which had secured the author a late but nonetheless emphatic breakthrough on the European literary scene.<sup>36</sup> More significantly, the reception of Ein Weg im Dunkeln already reveals one of the seminal thoughts in Doderer criticism: the identification of

the author with a very distinctive style of writing and the - as yet - implicit demands for more of the same. This was reflected even more clearly, as we have suggested already, in the critical response to Doderer's ensuing publication, the 1958 reprint of Ein Mord den jeder be-geht. The critics' familiarity with the 'Viennese' novels, allied to their intrinsic antipathy towards the detective novel, clearly hampered their attempts to provide the potential reader with a review commensurate with the broad spectrum of implications inherent in Doderer's novel.

Whether the influence of Die Strudlhofstiege and Die Dämonen also impaired the critics' view of Doderer's next two publications, the 'divertimento' Die Posaunen von Jericho (1958) and the essay Grundlagen und Funktion des Romans (1958), is a question which must unfortunately remain unanswered, as both works were published in smaller publishing houses, neither of which was able to provide any reviews.<sup>37</sup> There is, however, no lack of accessible material on Doderer's subsequent publication, Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen (1959), a collection of short stories which was, on the whole, favourably received. Yet here, too, the potential reader rarely encounters a review untempered by the influence of the 'Viennese' novels:

Als 'Marginalien' zu einem bedeutenden Œuvre und als vorbereitende Fingerübung zu einem im Entstehen begriffenen humoristischen Roman wird man Doderers Erzählungen mit Interesse und vielfach mit Vergnügen lesen.<sup>38</sup>

Bei allen Vorbehalten bestätigen auch solche 'Nebenarbeiten' den schwer einzuordnenden Rang des Autors.<sup>39</sup>

Was freilich eingebettet in den Strom seiner [Doderers] großer Romane erträglich ist und unerlässlich sein mag, in dem ja immer wieder neue Lichter aufgesetzt werden und damit Überhartes, Einseitiges wie PerverSES, wenn nicht neutralisiert, so doch relativiert, weil geordnet werden kann, erscheint -

isoliert vorgestellt in den Kurzgeschichten - häufig grell, ja unerträglich. Das Panorama einer Romanwelt, das sich aus solchen Details aufbaut, kann, wenn es dichterisch gestaltet ist, die Wirklichkeit unserer Welt repräsentieren. Vereinzelt und verzettelt zerfällt diese Wirklichkeit in interessante 'Fälle'.<sup>40</sup>

Verglichen mit der Strudlhofstiege und den Dämonen wirken sie [die Geschichten] wie Fingerübungen oder doch zumindest wie Skizzen ... ein kurzer aber einprägsamer Einführungskurs in das Hauptwerk des Dichters.<sup>41</sup>

Doch seine [Doderers] eigentliche Domäne sind diese Kurz- und Kürzestgeschichten nicht. Als Werkspäne bestätigen sie lediglich den schon bekannten Ruhm. Hinter den besten, die ohne Schluß enden, steht ein Roman von 1000 Seiten. Ein Roman, der auf langen Wegen das hier in präzisiertem Milieu nur angelegte Labyrinth der Psychologie zu seinem Ende gehen könnte.<sup>42</sup>

Man wird alles in allem diese Geschichten, so reizvoll sie im einzelnen sein mögen, nur als Randerscheinungen im Schaffen Doderers bezeichnen dürfen, als kleine Produkte einer launigen Stimmung, Spielereien am Rande des Werks. Neben den großen Romanen haben sie kaum einen eigenen Platz. Bei den wenigen ernsthaften Geschichten, die der Band enthält, macht sich ein gewisser Mangel an Raum bemerkbar. Konzentriert zu erzählen, ist nicht Doderers Begabung. Er braucht Bewegungsfreiheit, um seine Einfälle spielen zu lassen ...<sup>43</sup>

Wäre Doderer nicht der Autor der Strudlhofstiege und der Dämonen, man würde diese Feuilletons, für den Tag geschrieben, für die Unterhaltungsbeilage, herzlich unbedeutend finden. Und da er der Autor dieser beiden Romane ist, erst recht. Es läßt sich nicht verheimlichen, diese Kurzgeschichten, auch wenn sie apart, als 'Kürzestgeschichten' auftreten, sind von einer Albernheit, die fast wie Schabernack anmutet.<sup>44</sup>

Solche Geschichten, die das Zwielfichtige und Unheimliche - etwa in den Hausmeister-Erzählungen - mit einem hintergründigen Witz im Belanglosen freilegen, lesen sich nur auf den ersten Blick als Kabinettstücke grotesken Humors; sieht man länger hin, wird deutlich, daß es auch hier um Dämonen geht, die unterirdisch

den Boden zerwühlen, daß es Doderer nicht um das Erheiternde, vielmehr um das Bedrohliche von Randerscheinungen im Gebäude der Sozietät geht.

Vielleicht bekundet sich einzig hier die Kontinuität eines Erzählens, das man ein wenig vorschnell als Abgesang des fin de siècle in die Nachfolge Wiener Gesellschaftsliteratur gestellt hat.<sup>45</sup>

Ironically, Wolf Jobst Siedler's attempt in the last quotation above to relate Doderer's post-1956 publications to Die Dämonen does not lead to the long overdue recognition that Doderer's works can be only superficially related to the tradition of the 'Wiener Gesellschaftsroman'. Unlike Siedler, most critics seek to relate Doderer's later works to his 'Viennese' novels not for the sake of a better understanding of the author's artistic development but simply for the sake of comparison on the level of subject matter. Indeed the almost pathological preoccupation on the part of some critics with the two mammoth novels of the fifties leads to what one might term a 'Dämonenjagd' in analogy to the constant hunt for the 'falcon',<sup>46</sup> which characterized late nineteenth century criticism of the 'Novelle' in the wake of Paul Heyse's 'Falkentheorie'.<sup>47</sup> For just as Heyse was convinced that every 'Novelle' must contain something akin to the falcon of the ninth story of the fifth day of Boccaccio's Decameron, so too Doderer's critics seemed determined to find something 'demonic' in each of the author's works. Or is it a mere coincidence that Inge Meidinger-Geise should describe Zienhammer of Der Grenzwald as 'dämonisch fad',<sup>48</sup> and point out his 'vage Dämonie',<sup>49</sup> in a review of Doderer's Frühe Prosa? The same critic rarely manages to get through a review on Doderer without referring to the 'demonic' - or lack of it:

Das Fragment entwickelt diese sibirische Zeit wahrhaft mit nüchterner Dämonie ...<sup>50</sup>

... eine Überlegenheit über Dinge und Ereignisse, deren Dämonien jedoch niemals von diesem Autor gering geschätzt wurden ...<sup>51</sup>

Die neun anderen Geschichten besitzen bei einer schmalen Kaum-Handlung die Dramatik des Alltags, in dem die Dinge dämonisch agieren ...<sup>52</sup>

Jeder bewahrt 'Ordnung' und 'Form' -- und ohne Dämonie stehen daneben die geheimen menschlichen Findungen und Trennungen ...<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, Humbert Fink describes Wewerka as a 'demon' of the lower regions.<sup>54</sup> Hans Gensecke warns of the enticement towards the unusual, indeed the 'demonic',<sup>55</sup> in Ein Mord den jeder begeht, Hermann Lenz perceives the effects of the 'demonic',<sup>56</sup> in the same novel, and Karl Silex declares: 'In unheimlicher Weise beherrschte das Dämonische auch schon diesen Roman ...',<sup>57</sup> The reviewer signing himself W.T. says of the early Doderer: 'Doderer breitet Zeitgeschichte aus und vereint dabei auf mitunter raffinierte Weise Naturalismus und Innerlichkeit, Wirklichkeitsbeschreibung und dämonische Seelenverwirrung'.<sup>58</sup> It would be simple, but superfluous to amplify this list of examples still further, but one final illustration is of relevance. Hermann Fauler says of Ein Mord den jeder begeht: 'Wer sich für Fragen des Schicksalsbegriffs im allgemeinen, bei Doderer im besonderen, sowie dafür interessiert, was wir "dämonisch" oder auch "Die Dämonen" zu nennen pflegen, wird sich nicht ohne Gewinn mit Doderers Romanhelden Conrad Castiletz befassen.'<sup>59</sup> More significantly, Fauler concludes by relating the novel to the very genre Siedler warns against: 'Die Gesamtatmosphäre des Buches schließlich ist die des gehobenen Wiener Gesellschaftsromans um die Mitte der 20er Jahre unseres Jahrhunderts.'<sup>60</sup> Already the contours of an image with which

Doderer is identified are becoming clearer. The dangers of such a pre-occupation with what we consider a false, or at least distorted image of Doderer are best reflected in the critical response to Die Merowinger, as we shall see in due course.

Returning to Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen, one is immediately struck by one further aspect of the reception this collection of short stories provoked. Although the reaction to these short stories was on the whole positive, one senses a note of caution in the approbation, for again and again the critics feel obliged to draw the prospective reader's attention to Doderer's 'scurrility'. Helmut Olles talks of the volume with the 'scurrilous' title Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen,<sup>61</sup> Siedler emphasizes that the 'Kürzestgeschichten' are 'ins Skurrile ... verknappt',<sup>62</sup> but others are even more explicit:

... von den 28 vorliegenden Stücken schlagen viele einen Grundton von seltsamer, hintergründiger Skurrilität an, manche schon vom ersten Wort an ... Mehr als einmal denkt man an Herzmanowsky-Orlando [sic] ...<sup>63</sup>

Man spürt die Staubdämonen auf sehr unmittelbare und unheimliche Weise, die skurrile Hintergründigkeit und den ganzen Ernst des schwarzen Humors.<sup>64</sup>

Die Sprache dieser kurzen Prosa ist eigenwillig, ihre Thematik überwiegend skurril, ihre Psychologie stets hintergründig, oft abgründig.<sup>65</sup>

Die meisten von ihnen [den Geschichten] wachsen aus einer sehr robusten Wirklichkeit heraus, die Doderer jedoch immer an einem ganz bestimmten Punkte überspannt und dadurch ins Skurrile, Abseitige überführt.<sup>66</sup>

Weit eindringlicher als diese Versuche auf bereits befahrenen Wegen aber sind Doderers Phantasieritte, in denen er seinen Hang zu skurrilen oder unheimlichen Ausbrüchen aus der Realität nachgibt.<sup>67</sup>

Der späte Doderer der fünfziger Jahre läßt jedoch dem Skurillen [sic] mehr Raum ...<sup>68</sup>

Es ist eine ganz besondere Form von Humor, ein Humor, der gleichzeitig augenzwinkernd und abwehrend vor dem Leser steht, der gleichermaßen lächelnde Übereinstimmung und ironische Distanz in sich birgt und der nicht selten die Grenze zum Skurillen, ja sogar Grotesken überschreitet.<sup>69</sup>

... Es sind durchweg Randerscheinungen des Lebens, Grenzüberschreitungen, auch manchmal nach der Richtung des Geschmacks ...<sup>70</sup>

The mild criticism perceptible in the final quotation is in a sense a harbinger of the reception of Die Merowinger; but what is here merely a gentle reprimand becomes the sharpest of reproaches in the critical reviews of Doderer's next novel. Indeed, even before Die Merowinger was published, rumour had it that something even more outrageous than Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen was about to appear on the literary scene:

Von dem neuen Doderer-Roman hat man bereits vor dem Erscheinen raunen gehört, daß er an Skurrilität die bisherigen Werke des Dichters in den Schatten stelle, ja eine Art literarische Versammlung von allerlei menschlichen kuriositäten und Bizarrerien bringe.<sup>71</sup>

Untertitel wie 'Humane Anwendung verlängerter Blattzangen', 'Frisöre und Klistöre - Die Orgel des Grimms' und 'Der Paust'sche Sack - Die Subkontisten' lassen das Schlimmste an 'schwarzem' Humor befürchten.<sup>72</sup>

At least one critic felt it necessary to suggest that Doderer's forthcoming publication should not follow the path established in the short stories:



Zuweilen allerdings ist das Gerüst der Fabel überlastet, dann legt Doderer nicht das Gewürm unter den angehobenen Steinen des Alltags frei, er selber reichert das Banale mit Unheimlichem an, dem keine Überzeugungskraft innewohnt. Da wird es dann kauzig, nicht abgründig, und in solcher Überforderung des beiläufigen liegt hier und da die Gefahr dieser Geschichten, wie es schon die Gefahr der allzu versponnenen Erzählung von der 'Menschwerdung des Amtsrates Julius Zihal' war. Die Merowinger müssen zeigen, wohin Doderers Weg nach den großen Wiener Romanen geht. Man sieht dem Buch voller aufs höchste gespannter Hoffnungen, aber auch mit ein wenig Sorge entgegen.<sup>73</sup>

Although Wolf Jobst Siedler's criticism here is admittedly only mildly prescriptive, it does point in the direction of some of the most significant and misguided criticism of Die Merowinger.

## II Die Merowinger

If some critics could argue, with perhaps a little justification, that Doderer's publications since 1956 had been part of a more or less well-planned publishing policy aimed at taking full advantage of the fame Doderer had attained with his so-called 'Viennese' novels,<sup>74</sup> the same could certainly not be said of Die Merowinger, his long-awaited, first full-length novel since Die Dämonen. Doderer first mentioned the new novel explicitly in February 1950,<sup>75</sup> and the genesis of the novel spans some twelve years. Yet the 367-page end product appears in comparison to the 912-page Strudlhofstiege and the 1347-page Dämonen to be almost a short sketch, as a rather tongue-in-cheek Otto F. Beer says.<sup>76</sup>

However, it is not only the sheer size of the novel that does not correspond with the critics' expectations. The outré, complex and at times downright bizarre plot presents the professional reviewer with an unenviable dilemma, for he is confronted with a new work by an established literary figure which is profoundly different from the works on which his success is founded. Although the anonymous reviewer in La Revue de Bruxelles assures his readers that Die Merowinger 'a été salué avec enthousiasme par la critique tant en Autriche qu'en Allemagne et en Suisse alémanique',<sup>77</sup> even a cursory glance at the reviews of the novel is enough to reveal the absolute perplexity of the critics in the face of such an unexpectedly original publication, a perplexity ironically reflected in the critics' inability to agree on even the price and length of the novel. (Estimates range from DM 13.80 for a mere 364 pages<sup>78</sup> to a bargain 568 pages at DM 16.80.)<sup>79</sup>

More significantly, the reviewers embark on a series of reluctant, tentative and occasionally unreservedly speculative attempts at interpretation which at times do more credit to the reviewer's imagination than to the novel itself and often leave the prospective reader no less baffled than the critic. Those reviewers who are obviously completely at a loss as to how to go about interpreting the novel predictably have recourse to one of the least favoured but most frequently used tools in the critic's workshop as a final resort: the roman à clef interpretation. Wilhelm Krüger clearly feels it necessary to fall back on this convenient expedient, but, characteristically for a critic of Die Merowinger, he is unwilling to commit himself: 'Welch ein Aufwand an Erfindung, an Phantasie bei jeder dieser grotesken Figuren, die gut und gern zwei Romanen als Handelnde dienen könnten und vielleicht sogar müßten, wollte man streng nach den Regeln der Kunst gehen - aber Doderer hat ja wohl bewußt alles in einen Topf geworfen, so daß man fast den Verdacht hegen könnte, diese

Verwirrung sollte einen Schlüsselroman tarnen.'<sup>80</sup> It is worth pointing out that this level of interpretation is by no means the preserve of the feuilletonistic reviewer. In the Swedish academic periodical Moderna Språk Paul Patera puts forward the same view as Krüger, again not without a face-saving qualification: '... es handelt sich - vermutlich - um einen breit angelegten Schlüsselroman.'<sup>81</sup> Patera points out that Doderer appears in the novel under the transparent disguise of Döblinger, while Elisabeth Friedericke Krestel is presumably the authoress Dorothea Zeemann.<sup>82</sup> Patera is not, however, able to point to any other real-life models for Doderer's characters. Nevertheless, as recently as 1979 the notion of Die Merowinger as a roman à clef was still to be found. In a report on the (at that time abortive) attempt of Ernst Schmidt junior to film Die Merowinger, Michael Prager assures us that Hermann Schürer went down in literary history as the figure of Pelimbert der Indiskutable,<sup>83</sup> a figure with whom, ironically, Doderer is reported by Wolfgang Fleischer to have identified himself: 'Auf ihn [Pelimbert] hatte Doderer bei der Anfrage eines Universitätsinstituts als eigentlich alles sagendes Selbstporträt hingewiesen: Merowinger S.115 ab "Um so lieber gedenken wir noch einmal Pelimberts ..." bis 177, Absatz.'<sup>84</sup> Prager even manages to come up with another model for Elisabeth Friedericke Krestel: 'Elfriede Gerstl ... ging, unschwer identifizierbar, als Elisabeth Friedericke Krestel in die Literaturgeschichte ein ...'<sup>85</sup> The fruitlessness of such an approach to Doderer's novels is surely self-evident.

A shade less superficial, but no more satisfying from an aesthetic point of view, is the idea that Die Merowinger is nothing but one huge joke. Edgar Traugott, for instance, is convinced that the novel is at times more akin to a caricature or a 'Bierzeitung',<sup>86</sup> and advises his readers that the 'gegenwärtige Faschingszeit',<sup>87</sup> is the ideal time to read it. The anonymous reviewer in Lübecker Nachrichten is equally content

to dismiss the novel as a mere joke: 'Mit Schmunzeln läßt man sich dabei auch gefallen, weil das mit viel angeborenem Sinn für das Optische geschieht, wie Doderer eine alte Anekdote literarisch auffrisiert: die Wiener Kabarettistin Cissy Cramer behandelte einmal ähnliches in einem Chanson: "Was sind das für verzwickte Familienverhältnisse."'<sup>88</sup> In a review entitled 'Reichlich breitgewalzter Scherz' with the motto 'Getretener Quark wird breit, nicht stark' (Goethe: Westöstlicher Diwan), Jochen Schmidt arrives at the same rather facile conclusion, but is at least critical: 'Hier wurde ein einziger Scherz, ein kabarettistischer Gag, so in die Breite gewalzt, daß er schließlich hauchdünn wurde.'<sup>89</sup> Schmidt is not the only critic to take umbrage at Doderer's sense of humour. Patera warns: 'Man fragt sich da bekümmert, wo die Genialität aufhört und Gymnasialscherze anfangen. Manches ist durchaus lustig, aber kaum lustiger als die Dinge, die wir vor einem Vierteljahrhundert in unserer Maturazeitung begingen.'<sup>90</sup> It is worth noting here that Doderer's unique sense of humour has often been a stumbling-block for a relatively objective appreciation of his works, provoking the whole spectrum of reactions which characterizes the reception of his novels. For what some critics dismiss as 'schoolboyish',<sup>91</sup> is for others an immutable part of the very essence of Doderer's style, a quality only rarely found in German literature.<sup>92</sup> As elsewhere in Doderer criticism, the reviewers are either captivated or repelled by an aspect of the subject matter, and their final judgements accord with remarkable regularity with this initial emotional response.

Returning to the critical response to Die Merowinger, it is worth emphasizing that the sheer variety of interpretations that attended its publication is quite unparalleled in the reception of Doderer's other works, and this indicates unequivocally just how confounded the critics were. The reviews simply abound with qualifying adverbs and adverbial conjunctions such as 'vielleicht', 'vermutlich', 'möglicherweise', 'wahr-

scheinlich', and the question mark seems to have been the order of the day. Moreover, the critics' perplexity is also reflected in a rash of non-committal and more or less meaningless adjectives such as 'kurios',<sup>93</sup> 'abstrus',<sup>94</sup> 'schelmenhaft-abstrus',<sup>95</sup> 'vertrackt',<sup>96</sup> and 'originell',<sup>97</sup> which colour their reviews. Even the 'Literatistische Gesellschaft', Hannover, is unwilling, or unable to arrive at a clear-cut conclusion in its circular:

Ob die Merowinger wie die vorangegangenen größeren Werke Doderers Die Strudlhofstiege und Die Dämonen in die Weltliteratur eingehen wird, kann man im Augenblick wohl noch nicht sagen; jedenfalls handelt es sich um eine köstliche Neuerscheinung des diesjährigen Buchmarktes, die Laien wie Kritiker nachhaltig fesseln und beschäftigen wird ... Wahrscheinlich ist das Buch, das die immer wieder hervorbrechende Wut wie ein roter Faden durchläuft, als ein Wutanfall des Verfassers über die Dummheit einer fortschrittlichen Zeit zu verstehen.<sup>98</sup>

A further example of the hesitancy and uncertainty of the reviewers can be found in the following comment:

Nicht jede Art von Unsinn ist Unsinn. Oder, um das Wortspiel aufzulösen: Es gibt eine Form des literarischen Unsinnns, die sich bei näherem Hinschauen als eine Gestalt raffiniert verschlüsselten Sinns erweist. Freilich kann der Sinn auf so hinterhältige Weise versteckt sein, daß derjenige, der ihn allzu dingfest machen möchte, nur um so mehr in die Irre rennt. Möglicherweise gehört Heimito von Doderers neuster Roman zu diesen Büchern, denn die Handlungsfäden sind so deutlich wie zugleich verwirrend aufgestellt, daß man das größte Vergnügen des Autors bei jedem Versuch einer Entschlüsselung wittern darf.<sup>99</sup>

Walter Lennig is equally reluctant to risk an interpretation: 'die böses-

ten Stellen sind vielleicht recht absichtlich verhüllt durch eine Camouflage, wie sie durch ein kategorisches Austria-Deutsch so leicht zu bewerkstelligen ist.'<sup>100</sup> Edgar Traugott speculates that it might well have been part of the author's intention to adorn his message, his work and his personality with as many question marks and 'Schnörkel' as possible.<sup>101</sup> The anonymous reviewer in Lübecker Nachrichten ventures to ask whether we can call Doderer's work a novel at all: 'Ein Roman? Es ist eher eine epische Fülle skurriler und farbiger Gedankenbasteleien, geboten mit unübersehbarer Liebe zum Detail, durch die, falls es sie überhaupt gegeben haben mag, eine Absicht, eine Gesamtkonzeption einfach verschwindet. Fragen wir also nicht, was dieses Buch "aussagen" will, die vielen Schilderungen sind sich selbst genug.'<sup>102</sup> It is perhaps characteristic that the reviewer's only rebuke reveals on the one hand what he feels Doderer ought to have been writing about and on the other just how little he has understood of what the novelist has actually written: 'Gibt es denn überhaupt noch so viele Menschen, die sich vor Wut und Temperament nicht lassen können, ist es nicht zeittypischer, den Abgespannten und Ausgepumpten beim Psychotherapeuten zu begegnen? Denen, die an zu wenig Temperament leiden? Gleichviel. - Der Dichter erweckt durch die Schilderung seiner Wütenden auf jeden Fall unser Interesse.'<sup>103</sup> Finally, the reviewer signing himself KPM frankly admits his perplexity: 'So vermag man nicht oder nur undeutlich zu erkennen, was eigentlich insgesamt beabsichtigt und auf was denn nun gezielt wird. Das hinterläßt einen fragwürdigen Eindruck, selbst dann, wenn man geneigt ist, das Ganze nur als einen prächtig aufgeblasenen literarischen Mordsspaß mit einigen satirischen Flügeln gelten zu lassen.'<sup>104</sup>

Of the more speculative attempts at interpreting Die Merowinger, a representative selection must suffice to illustrate the heterogeneity of the critical voices. Erich Kock declares that the novel is a satire at

the expense of the European nobility:

Kaum ein Zweifel darüber ist möglich: Heimito von Doderers Satire nagelt das Lebens- und Denkschema einer Art von Adel fest, deren üppige Flora wir heute in ganz Mitteleuropa bestaunen können: Menschen, die sich und ihre Nachkommen darauf fixiert haben, der Nachwelt nichts als ihren Namen, besser: nichts als sich selber zu hinterlassen. Denn wer ist schon ein 'von'? Das Wörtchen 'von' muß doch immer wieder dazu herhalten, den Mythos der Herkunft zu kultivieren. Was Wunder, wenn sich Jung und Alt darauf spezialisiert, eine neue Umwelt und eine veränderte Welt auf diesen uralten Nenner zu bringen?<sup>105</sup>

Would it be churlish to ask why, then, Doderer, who for left-wing critics is eminently 'adelsbewußt',<sup>106</sup> should choose to cling to his own aristocratic title? After all, the little word 'von' as an indication of noble birth was abolished by the First Republic in Austria and Doderer used it 'juridisch korrekt als Künstlername'.<sup>107</sup>

In a passage headed 'Humbug oder Zeitkritik' the reviewer signing himself D.F. provides us with a few more suggestions as to what Doderer's Die Merowinger is all about:

Barockes Rüpelenspiel mit österreichischen Zutaten von Nestroy bis Herzmanovsky-Orlando? Vorwand, um gelehrten Jux zu verbreiten, worin Doderer Meister ist? Lust an versteckten Anspielungen, die erst bei gesteigerter Aufmerksamkeit ihren Hautgout verbreiten? Dämonischer Spaß aus der Requisitenkammer des Marquis de Sade? Oder vielleicht doch ein Vexierspiegel des Zeitalters, in dem die Teufel der Macht und der Sexualität umgehen wie brüllende Löwen, suchend wen sie verschlingen?<sup>108</sup>

It goes almost without saying that the reviewer makes no attempt to

answer these questions.

Emil Franzel begins his review of Die Merowinger by stating that, since Döblinger's claim that the novel is 'alles Unsinn'<sup>109</sup> is the key to the labyrinth into which the author has enticed the reader, it is futile to undertake any serious attempt to make sense of the novel. Yet this does not prevent Franzel from launching into a series of highly speculative interpretations:

Komisch wird die Genealogie immer, wenn sich einer versteigt, wenn der Bürgerliche durchaus adelige Vorfahren erklettern will, manchmal dabei ein bisserl Bäumchenverkaufen spielt und rasch den Ast wechselt, um an sein Ziel zu kommen. Bei Doderers Merowingern schwingt aber wohl noch anderes mit. Man denkt an die Ahnenproben im Tausendjährigen Reich, an die Ahnenpässe und Ariernachweise, an die privaten und gelegentlich auch amtlichen Korrekturen, die im persönlichen oder im Staatsinteresse vorgenommen wurden, man denkt an den ganzen Humbug von nordischer Rasse, Langschädeln, arischem Blut und Edelplasma, man fühlt sich an Goebbels erinnert, an Figuren wie den kneiferbewehrten Reichsführer-SS, an Streicher und Ley und manche anderen Produkte der Rassenspinnerei (man verzeihe uns die Pietätlosigkeit gegenüber den Toten, aber sie haben es zu toll getrieben, als daß man es ganz vergessen und verschweigen könnte), man gleitet hinüber in die Laboratorien der Biologen und Erbforscher, wo unter den ehernen Mendelschen Gesetzen die Dominanten zu Schicksalslinien der Menschheit werden ...

Und Kafka! Die heillose Verfilzung von Unsinn, Zufall, Verhängnis, Langeweile und Fiebertraum kann doch nur eine Satire auf Kafka und den Kafkarummel sein, wo alles tiefsinnig sein soll, auch wenn es nur absurd ist ... Ich vermissе Brecht, der eigentlich in dieser Galerie ausgestopfter Modegrößen ebenfalls erscheinen müßte.<sup>110</sup>

Significantly, Franzel goes on to ask: 'Oder habe ich all das mißverstanden? Geht der Unsinn so weit, daß er sich jeder logischen Deutung wider-



setzt und l'art pour l'art ist ...?<sup>111</sup>

Hilde Spiel deduces that the novel symbolizes nothing less than the decline of European nobility,<sup>112</sup> speculates that Childerich might embody the purest manifestation of the totalitarian State, i.e. an 'Ein-Mann-Diktatur', which ends in the 'Entmannung' of the dictator<sup>113</sup> and goes on to argue that the Bartenbruch dynasty as a whole could be equated with the hierarchy of the Third Reich. Symptomatically, Spiel qualifies her attempts at interpretation by saying: 'Irrtümer sind nicht ausgeschlossen, doch vielleicht locken sie dem befremdeten Dichter dafür die Wahrheit aus.'<sup>114</sup> In a dissertation on Doderer as a social realist, M. R. Mitchell points in the same direction, but is a little more reluctant to commit himself: 'Die Merowinger cannot be interpreted as an allegory of Nazi Germany - i.e. the total family = the 1000-jährige Reich, the "Plombierer" with their "physiognomische Gerechtigkeit" = SS; but the story reveals the manner of thinking and the methods of such people.'<sup>115</sup> Lutz-Werner Wolff, on the other hand, describes the novel as Doderer's 'Abrechnung mit der Hitlerzeit'.<sup>116</sup>

The anonymous reviewer in the Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung takes yet another approach; for him, Doderer's scorn is clearly directed at the avaricious disciples of Asclepius represented by the Baron von Bartenbruch [sic].<sup>117</sup> Klaus Colberg, finally, is convinced that Doderer's intention in Die Merowinger was certainly not what is commonly understood by 'Tief-sinn und Tiefgründigkeit', and adds: 'Auch nicht, wie einige Kritiker meinten, eine "Zeitsatire". Dazu sind nämlich die echten Wirklichkeitsbezüge zur jüngsten Vergangenheit zu schwach. Nein, Doderer wird hier mit der unbekümmerten und unzimmerlichen Übertragung feudalherrschaftlicher Grundvorstellungen auf unsere absolut andersgeartete Gegenwart etwas ganz anderes beabsichtigt haben: eine Entkrampfung sowohl unseres Geschichtstiefsinns als auch der Gegenwartsverbissenheit unserer Literatur.'<sup>118</sup>

There is, of course, a grain of truth in most of these interpretations, but they can be at best only very tenuously related to Doderer's novel. One is tempted to agree with the anonymous critic in Der Spiegel, who suggests that Döblinger's ironic and scornful confession in the epilogue is far more plausible than the speculative attempts at interpretation undertaken by admiring feuilletonists.<sup>119</sup>

### III The 'Canonization' of the 'Viennese' Novels

Unbefangen und unbelastet von Einschätzungen, die ein Autor früher und in anderem Zusammenhang erfahren hat, soll der Kritiker an ein neues Werk, sei es selbst das eines hochrenommierten Schriftstellers, herangehen. Für ihn darf es weder belastende Hypothesen noch vorzutragende Gutschriften geben. Kennen muß er zwar auch die anderen Arbeiten, die vor der jüngsten Dichtung entstanden sind, um nicht beim Gang durch ein noch unbekanntes Gelände mögliche Orientierungshilfen ungenutzt zu lassen. Nie aber sollte der Ruhm oder die modische Attraktivität eines Schriftstellers, sollten Klang und Rang eines Namens das Urteil beeinflussen, es präokkupieren oder auch nur zu einer Vorsicht verführen, die sich hinter gewundene 'Wenn' und 'Aber' verschanzt und alle Rückzugsmöglichkeiten offen läßt.<sup>120</sup>

It is surely no coincidence that Alfred Holzinger should feel obliged to re-iterate the critic's basic code of conduct in the preamble to his review of Die Merowinger. For here more than anywhere in Doderer's writings the temptation to read and interpret a novel in terms of its predecessors is so great that few critics are able to withstand it. Hol-

zinger himself has the courage to put his subjective impression down in print: 'Doderers Wut-Buch ... ist mißraten. Es langweilt und macht wütend. Des Autors Klassifikation stimmt: eine "dubiöse und scabrése Erzählung" (223), die, das ist noch zu ergänzen, zu einem Roman aufgeschwemmt wurde.'<sup>121</sup> Ch. Wentinck informs readers of Elseviers Weekblad that Doderer has often been ranked alongside Musil and Balzac, and rightly adds: 'Gegeven deze - en andere - waarderingen voelt de recensent die de jongste Doderer Die Merowinger oder die totale Familie uit handen heeft gelegd, zich uiteraard bevangen bij zijn oordeel.'<sup>122</sup> It is the inability on the part of most reviewers to cast aside all thoughts of the Doderer that was or that ought to be, that vitiates so much criticism of Die Merowinger. Wentinck is one of the few reviewers brave enough to reach a definitive conclusion: 'wat een rotboek!'<sup>123</sup>

Much more symptomatic of the critical response to Die Merowinger are the following remarks by the anonymous reviewer in Die Barke: 'Man ist ein wenig ratlos, wie man andeuten soll, was dieser neue Roman Heimito von Doderers ist ... Aber wenn es wirklich Blödsinn ist, so ist es ein großartig geistreicher.'<sup>124</sup> It would seem as if a large number of critics had unconsciously acquiesced in Johann A. Boeck's view: 'Ein Mann wie Doderer schreibt eben, selbst so er sich's vornähme, nicht einfach ein heiteres Buch, sondern stets ein Werk in jenen Dimensionen, die seinem Rang entsprechen.'<sup>125</sup> Boeck himself manages to unearth no less than 'fünf Schichten ... bei der ersten Lektüre'<sup>126</sup> and only a week later he is able to to detect a sixth dimension as he insists: 'Ein Mann seines [Doderers] Ranges ... und seines Jahrgangs ... füllt nicht 367 Buchseiten, ohne daß darin die Physiognomie seiner Gesamtpersönlichkeit enthalten wäre.'<sup>127</sup> The relationship between Doderer's age and the aesthetic quality of Die Merowinger is more than a little arcane.

One wonders whether Die Merowinger would have been hailed as a

'Meisterstück',<sup>128</sup> a 'vollkommenes Lesevergnügen',<sup>129</sup> a 'brillant ouvrage',<sup>130</sup> or a 'Lehrbuch deutscher Prosa'<sup>131</sup> if it had been published before the mammoth novels of the fifties. Similarly, one must ask whether it is not Doderer's reputation that induces the Belgian reviewer in Het Laatste Nieuws to include Die Merowinger among the 'drie grote werken die wij sedert de oorlog uit de duitstalige letterkundige produktie hebben gelezen'.<sup>132</sup> Further evidence of such disproportionate praise can be found in Mitchell's claim that Die Merowinger is 'a comic novel, probably one of the best in twentieth century German literature'.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, the anonymous critic in Bücherschiff describes the novel as 'ein humoristisches Buch vom Range des Felix Krull, ja in mancher Hinsicht über jenen hinausreichend'.<sup>134</sup> Michel Raus takes the superlatives one step further:

Ja, es stellt sich wirklich und ernsthaft die Frage, ob Heimito von Doderer sich nicht für Österreich und die deutschsprachige Literatur, insbesondere mit Die Merowinger ..., den Beinamen 'Rabelais des 20. Jahrhunderts' erschrieben habe? ... Die Merowinger oder die totale Familie fordern ihren Leser, warum es viele Liebhaber vorziehen, die Ironie in der deutschen Literatur bei Thomas Mann und dort in den Bekenntnissen des Hochstaplers Felix Krull, ihrer angeblich höchsten Ausprägung, enden zu lassen. Es kann jedoch kein Zweifel darüber bestehen, daß, bei allem Respekt und aller respektvollen Erinnerungen an die teuflischen Köstlichkeiten Mannscher Altersironie und -erotik, Doderers Roman den Krull aussticht und auf einem Nebengleis der deutschen Literaturgeschichte zurückläßt.<sup>135</sup>

If the numerous comparisons to Rabelais<sup>136</sup> and Jean Paul<sup>137</sup> seem a trifle unwarranted, then Herbert Eisenreich's discovery in Die Merowinger of a 'direkte Schlichtheit der Aussage', the likes of which we can otherwise find almost exclusively in Goethe,<sup>138</sup> can only be described as downright ludicrous.

Equally preposterous are Heinz Keil's conclusions in the review rather inaptly titled 'Lächerliche Maßlosigkeit': 'Der Roman darf ... als erfreuliches Zeichen dafür gelten, daß von einer Krise des Romans nicht mehr gesprochen werden kann. Der reflektiv-analytische überladene Roman (Proust, Kafka, Joyce) wie auch der ohne Fabel und Held dahinplätschernde innere Monolog (Joyce), die diese Krise auslösten, dürfen heute wohl endgültig als epische Fehlentwicklung gelten.'<sup>139</sup> One glance at a few histories of literature is enough to convince today's critic that such misguided and extravagant panegyrics are only conceivable in the wake of the huge success of the 'Viennese' novels. For, despite Wolfgang Rothe's assertion that Doderer's place in the history of literature will be immutably bound to Die Merowinger,<sup>140</sup> this novel has been largely forgotten or dismissed, and is even ignored in the standard Daten deutscher Dichtung.<sup>141</sup> Predictably, only Die Strudlhofstiege and Die Dämonen are ranked among the Hauptwerke der deutschen Literatur.<sup>142</sup> One must agree with E. Ottevaere's suggestion that, when Die Merowinger was nominated 'Book of the Month', it was not the novel itself but 'de auteur (en zijn vorig werk)',<sup>143</sup> that was honoured.

The legacy of the 'Viennese' novels is further reflected in the continuing feverish quest for 'demons' of every size and shape. Perhaps predictably, Meidinger-Geise is the worst offender:

Die spielerische Dämonie der erzählerischen Motive [in Die Posaunen von Jericho und Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen] mündet in den Höllenspaß und beißenden Spott des neuen Romans.<sup>144</sup>

... die fantastische Realität einer Rüpelwelt, in der abermals Dämonen hausen ...<sup>145</sup>

Machtwut, Jähzorn, Brutalität, List, Pseudoheldentum, Hysterie, Scharlatanerie, komische Würde - all dies erkennen wir am Werke, all dies prägt die Dämönlein dieses Romans.<sup>146</sup>

Dämonlein besonderer Art, eine Rüpelwelt voll Hemmungslosigkeit, ergänzt [sic] die Bereiche der großen Dämonen.<sup>147</sup>

Wer diesen lärmig-spaßigen, grimmig spöttischen Querweg Doderers innerhalb seines bisherigen Werkes nicht mitmachen will, sollte sich Rang und Bedeutung dieses Romanciers nicht verzerren lassen, sondern sich an Doderers große Dämonen halten - die Merowingischen Dämonlein bleiben bocksspielerische Ergänzung.<sup>148</sup>

Meidinger-Geise is, of course, not the only critic whose very vocabulary is infected by the title of Doderer's bulkiest novel. Hilde Spiel, for example, describes Die Merowinger as a 'dämonische Drolerie',<sup>149</sup> while the reviewer who signs himself KPM detects 'vieles Dämonische',<sup>150</sup> in the novel, but declines to provide the reader with any concrete examples. Günter Blöcker informs us that Doderer's detractors regard the author as 'eine Art dämonisch entfesselte Archivratseele',<sup>151</sup> and says of Die Merowinger: 'Die Dämonisierung des Alltags ist total.'<sup>152</sup> Anna Maria dell'Agli declares: 'Per Hulesch e Quenzel ... l'irascibilità è il terreno di un facile esperimento, la breccia attraverso la quale i demoni maligni dello irrazionale penetrano nella psiche umana ...',<sup>153</sup> Finally, the anonymous reviewer in Welt der Bücher finds almost everything in the novel 'demonic'. Thus the castration of Childerich, and the manifold marriages point to the 'demonic' basis of sex.<sup>154</sup> Childerich's sexual drive is, of course, equally 'demonic'.<sup>155</sup> 'Doch begegnen wir der Dämonie nicht in unverhüllter Form. Sie wird ins Groteske ... verwandelt',<sup>156</sup> the reviewer adds. Moreover, in Döblinger 'the demonic' is transformed into 'Tücke'.<sup>157</sup> This is, the reviewer concludes, all part of Doderer's ultimate aim - to present the demonic forces of our world in the form of the grotesque.<sup>158</sup> This does not, of course, mean that the term 'demonic' is not occasionally a quite pertinent and germane description of the machinations of some of Doderer's characters, but its gross overuse by the critics does imply a

certain preoccupation on their part with an image with which Doderer is all too readily and easily identified.

If the subtle - or not so subtle - linguistic allusions to Doderer's Die Dämonen highlight the almost overwhelming after-effects of the latter, then the same can also be said of the somewhat laboured attempts of some reviewers in the face of such an atypical work to emphasize the essential unity and continuity of Doderer's creative activity:

... wie in seinen früheren Romanen geht Doderers Technik auch diesmal darauf aus, Details, Mikrozüge gewissermaßen, durch Hypertrophie zu epochalen Fanalen zu erhöhen.<sup>159</sup>

Ein verwegenes Thema. Indessen ... dürften Leser der Strudlhofstiege und der Dämonen und insbesondere des Kurzromans Die erleuchteten Fenster oder die Menschwerdung des Amtsrates Julius Zihal über die Marotte Childerichs III. weniger erstaunt sein als Neulinge, die in Doderers Schule den ersten Kurs absolvieren.<sup>160</sup>

Dabei ist es bei aller Verschiedenheit von den erstgenannten Werken [Die Strudlhofstiege, Die Dämonen] nicht so, daß dieses Buch ganz aus dem Rahmen seines seitherigen Schaffens fiele. Es trägt nur allzu deutlich alle Kennzeichen seiner Provenienz: da wird die barocke Tradition nicht nur in Inhalt, Sprache und Form, sondern schon in der Zweiteiligkeit des Titels deutlich; da ist der oft weitschweifig-umständliche, aber stets lebensvolle Stil; da findet sich die Vorliebe für Historie, für skurrile Gestalten; da enthüllt sich ein höchst verzwicktes, aber scharf durchdachtes Handlungsgefüge.<sup>161</sup>

Jede Seite der Merowinger ... weist ihn [Doderer] als den Autor der Dämonen aus.<sup>162</sup>

Ein solches Buch konnte nur aus Österreich kommen und wohl auch dort nur vom Verfasser der Strudlhofstiege geschrieben werden.<sup>163</sup>

The final two comments might surprise today's reader, but such sweeping, unsubstantiated attempts to establish some sort of relationship between

apparently incompatible works reveal just how important it was for the critics to force Die Merowinger into a rigid frame of reference and thus give the impression of a logical, almost tangible progression in Doderer's work. Ivar Ivask typifies the critics' fixation with the type of oversimplified classification and categorization which has always dogged literary criticism and which reduces the aesthetic production of a major novelist to a mere schematic arrangement:

Besides his major novels, Doderer has always written short stories and what he himself calls 'Divertimenti'. After the publication of the highly dramatic novel Ein Mord den jeder begeht (1938), he wrote in 1938-39 the humorous short novel Die erleuchteten Fenster ... Again between the completion of Die Strudlhofstiege in 1948 ... and the publication of Die Dämonen in 1956, the divertimento Die Posaunen von Jericho was written in 1951 ... Although at present engaged in the writing of another major work, tentatively entitled Roman No.7, the just published satirical novel Die Merowinger seems to serve once more as a cathartic divertimento to release the author's accumulated spleen and anger.<sup>164</sup>

Elsewhere Ivask suggests that Die Merowinger ought to be subsumed under Doderer's so-called 'monographic' novels (Weber's term), which 'are centred in the Humanization of one character and tend towards dramatic concision'.<sup>165</sup> Lutz-Werner Wolff is also at pains to divide Doderer's work into neat little phases, with the final and aesthetically most successful phase dating from 1958 onwards, yet he has to admit: 'Eine besondere Stellung nehmen die Merowinger ein. Sie spielen um das Jahr 1950. Ein direktes Verhältnis zur Biographie ist aber nicht herzustellen (obwohl ein Schriftsteller auftritt)'.<sup>166</sup> One is tempted to agree with Clarence Brown that 'excellent books are slippery things. They slip through the fingers of policemen who want to prevent them being published, and once they're in



print, they slip out of the categories into which tidy-minded critics long to fix them.'<sup>167</sup> Perhaps, however, the word 'excellent' should be replaced here by 'atypical', for, amusing and thought-provoking as Die Merowinger may be, it simply does not stand up to the litmus test of the highest aesthetic criteria.

It is one of the many ironies of Doderer criticism that those critics who are unable to reconcile Die Merowinger with their conception of the type of novel Doderer ought to have written as a follow-up to Die Dämonen should fall into the same trap of oversimplification as those who strive to emphasize that Die Merowinger was an integral part of a Dodererian grand design along the lines of Ivask's model above. The dilemma facing all Doderer's critics was brutally simple: 'Wie immer man sein von einer vehementen Kraft getragenes, barock anmutendes Werk beurteilen mag, sein jetzt im Herbst erschienenenes, neues Buch fällt aus dem Rahmen dessen, was man von ihm erwartet haben mochte.'<sup>168</sup> Those critics who find it too difficult to relate Die Merowinger to Doderer's previous achievements take the logical, expedient way out, and simply dismiss the novel, as had been the case with the 'non-Viennese' Ein Mord den jeder begeht, as a mere 'by-product',<sup>169</sup> a 'comic jeu d'esprit',<sup>170</sup> a 'geistreicher literarischer Jux',<sup>171</sup> 'une œuvre d'un genre mineur',<sup>172</sup> 'ein üppig wuchernder Propfling auf dem Zihalschen Seitenast'.<sup>173</sup> Whether the critics labour to attribute to the novel even the most tenuous of links to Doderer's earlier works, or subscribe to the myth that anything that does not relate directly to the Vienna of the early part of the twentieth century, is not the 'real' Doderer: in both cases their criticism is refracted through the double prism of Die Strudlhofstiege and Die Dämonen. Paul F. Guenther provides a perfect example of this sort of criticism. Having dismissed Die erleuchteten Fenster as 'either a preparatory study to, or a by-product of the Magnum Opus Austriacum',<sup>174</sup> (= the Strudlhofstiege/Dämonen complex),

Guenther goes on to emphasize that Die Merowinger has 'nothing to do with the Magnum Opus Austriacum',<sup>175</sup> which leads him to the conclusion that, 'its 360 pages notwithstanding, this grotesque tour de force may well be no more than a pasttime [sic], a change of pace for relaxation from the rigors of pursuing more important business.'<sup>176</sup>

Yet the idea of Die Merowinger as a mere by-product might appear to be not totally unfounded, if one is prepared to lend credence to some of Doderer's utterances in this respect. In an interview with Wolfgang Libal, Doderer purportedly asserted: 'Ich habe mich mit den Merowingern einmal auf die zweite Linie zurückgezogen ... Ich bin auf das Thema bei historischen Studien im Jahre 1950 gestossen. Zum Spass habe ich die Skizze der ganzen Geschichte in einem Nachmittag entworfen und dann, damit ich im Erzählen bleibe, weiter ausgeführt. Und so hat sich die Sache zu einem Roman ausgewachsen.'<sup>177</sup> Predictably, Libal concludes: 'Wenn Doderer von einem Rückzug auf eine zweite Linie spricht, so meint er damit, daß die Merowinger sozusagen ein Nebenwerk sind, das Produkt erzählerischer Übungen, auf die Österreichs bedeutendster Romancier nicht verzichtet, auch wenn er mit "ernster" Arbeit beschäftigt ist.'<sup>178</sup> It is perhaps worth mentioning that Libal's article was circulated as a dpa press notice, so that its influence on the reception of the novel must not be underestimated. A clear echo of it can be heard in Traugott's conclusion: '... man kann die Neugier nicht ganz unterdrücken, wie sich unser Poeta nach diesem karnevalistischen Auftritt im Ernst seines nächsten Werkes zeigen wird ...'<sup>179</sup>

In his diaries, too, Doderer appears to denigrate his novel deliberately. As early as 1951 he writes: 'In den Merowingern werde ich mir eine Reservation für das Groteske schaffen, das mir sonst überall Unfug treibt.'<sup>180</sup> It has indeed been suggested that Die Merowinger constituted a cathartic process for Doderer which left him a 'tabula rasa' free from the complexes most clearly evident in Die Dämonen.<sup>181</sup> Freer and more

relaxed as Doderer's style in Die Wasserfälle von Slunj may be, the author does not succeed in exorcising in Die Merowinger his penchant for the grotesque, as his portrayal of the 'troglodytic' Wewerka or the 'Doppelfigur' Finy and Feverl in the later novel shows. The vexed question of Doderer's artistic development - or lack of it - between Die Dämonen and Roman No.7 will be examined in due course.

Nevertheless, further evidence of the apparent irrelevance of Die Merowinger can be found in a statement from Doderer's unpublished diaries quoted by Liewerscheidt: 'Mer [sic] entstanden in der Hauptsache nebenhin.'<sup>182</sup> Moreover, Michael Bachem quotes from an unpublished letter from Doderer to Dietrich Weber dated 30 December 1963, in which Doderer refers to Die Merowinger as the 'Ferien eines Realisten'.<sup>183</sup> The fact that Doderer worked on Die Wasserfälle von Slunj from October 1957 onwards appears to substantiate the theory that Die Merowinger is not part of the mainstream of his work, but a mere appendage. Liewerscheidt also provides us with an illuminating comment by Doderer after the publication of Die Merowinger: 'Eigentlich staune ich dieses Werk an. Es ist mir gänzlich fremd und in einer Technik geschrieben, die ich heute nicht mehr zu handhaben vermöchte. Gut, daß es vollendet ist.'<sup>184</sup> Yet not only are Doderer's feelings of alienation after the completion of a work both natural and commonplace;<sup>185</sup> such comments on Die Merowinger stand in sharp contrast to Doderer's later claims that this novel was one of his most satisfying works. The striking discrepancies and self-contradictions in Doderer's pronouncements on Die Merowinger should once again serve as a reminder of the dangers of simply accepting the canonical authority of what an author has to say about his own works. Perhaps it would be better to recall the concluding lines of D.H. Lawrence's essay on the novel: 'Oh, give me the novel! Let me hear what the novel says. As for the novelist, he is usually a dribbling liar.'<sup>186</sup>

#### IV The 'Viennese' Trilogy

A remarkable parallel to the reception of Doderer's Die Merowinger can be found in the critical response which Günter Grass's Örtlich be-  
täubt provoked. Here, too, the reactions of the reviewers range from sheer perplexity to downright condemnation. More significantly, Grass's new novel was, as was the case with Doderer's Merowinger, consistently interpreted and evaluated in terms of its predecessors - the so-called 'Danzig Trilogy'. As Manfred Durzak points out, Grass had already become as it were a historical figure: 'Seine Bücher werden bis hin zu den Hunde-  
jahren, die man beispielsweise bei ihrem Erscheinen ganz und gar nicht einstimmig als Meisterwerk begrüßte, kanonisiert. Aus der Distanz von wenigen Jahren heraus wird bereits die Nuanciertheit der kritischen Aufnahme von einer scheinbar erwiesenen objektiven Rangordnung aufgesogen.'<sup>187</sup> Moreover, Hundejahre was not the only part of Grass's 'Danzig Trilogy' that was subject to a less than uniformly positive reception. The reaction to Die Blechtrommel was also a strident, passionate affair in which, as John Reddick rightly asserts, a 'sorely inadequate Oskar myth'<sup>188</sup> (as an embodiment of freedom) came into being at the earliest stage of the reception and tended to reduce the scope for an open-minded approach to the novel. The complexity of the reception of Grass's Blechtrommel is also reflected in the controversy surrounding the awarding of the Bremen Prize for Literature and the fact that Die Blechtrommel was prominent amongst a number of books publicly burned in Düsseldorf by a religious youth organization in 1965. It is, of course, a well-known fact that an official from the Ministerium für Arbeit, Volkswohlfahrt und Gesundheitswesen in Hessen attempted to have Grass's Katz und Maus added to the 'Liste der jugendgefährdenden Schriften' in 1962, a proposal later can-

celled by the Minister himself, presumably in view of the opposition of a variety of literary experts.<sup>189</sup> In all 'some forty legal actions' were initiated against Die Blechtrommel and Katz und Maus, all of them in vain.<sup>190</sup>

If the critical reaction to Doderer's Strudlhofstiege and Dämonen lacked the glamour and controversy associated with Grass, it would nevertheless be a gross oversimplification to assume that the novels almost universally held up in retrospect as the canon according to which Doderer's subsequent publications were to be judged were unanimously acclaimed as masterpieces. This was not for want of attempts on the part of Doderer's publishers to convince the reviewers that the publication of Die Strudlhofstiege was a literary event of the first order. In a 'Vorbemerkung des Verlags zur Strudlhofstiege' they write:

... Es kann nicht Sache des Verlages sein, die Strudlhofstiege über diese kurze Anmerkung hinaus zu analysieren und zu werten. Diese Aufgabe muß dem Berufskritiker vorbehalten bleiben. Doch sei uns erlaubt, hier noch anzufügen, daß uns kein Vergleich geeignet scheint, das Buch in eine der bestehenden literarischen Kategorien einzuordnen. Es gibt keinen modernen deutschen oder ausländischen Roman, dem es ähnlich wäre; selbst die immerhin möglichen Vergleiche mit älteren Werken, wie den Romanen von Lawrence Sterne oder Jean Paul, zeigen schließlich nur, daß Doderers Strudlhofstiege eine ganz moderne und unabhängige Leistung ist. Das Werk wurzelt in der barocken Tradition Wiens, und wenn wir auf diesem Boden nach einer zeitgenössischen geistigen Verwandschaft suchen, so werden wir sie am besten in der Musik, und zwar bei Richard Strauß, finden. Und damit sei auch noch darauf hingewiesen, daß in der Strudlhofstiege die hohe Musikalität des Barock in Form und Sprache spürbar wird: der Roman ist sozusagen in vier 'Sätzen' aufgebaut, zwei gleich langen Sätzen zu Anfang, einem längeren dritten Satz und einem großen Schlußsatz. Die Komposition erfordert beim Lesen ein

mäßiges Tempo, das sich erst im letzten Satz zum Presto steigern darf.<sup>191</sup>

Roswitha Fischer has rightly noted that this 'kurze Anmerkung' contains most of the key words and phrases to which reviewers and critics of the novel repeatedly have recourse.<sup>192</sup> It is no exaggeration to say that much of the initial reception of Die Strudlhofstiege was literally determined by such enterprising publishers' propaganda. Here again it is quite evident just how susceptible the reviewer is to manipulation on a sub-literary level and how a non-aesthetic phenomenon such as advertising plays an ever-increasing role in the initial reception of a piece of literature. Moreover, it is not only the critic who is affected by the advertising practices of the publishers. As Werner Roeltinger says of Die Strudlhofstiege, 'Dem Leser wird ja von Anfang an das Bewußtsein, etwas Besonderes in Händen zu haben, aufoktroziert ... Ein gutes Buch setzt sich auch ohne dieser aufdringlichen Reklame [sic] durch ... Es wird zweifellos Leser geben, die an diesem Roman Gefallen finden. Es werden ihrer aber nicht viele sein.'<sup>193</sup> That the publishers' propaganda could also prove to be more of a stumbling-block than an aid to a relatively dispassionate approach to the novel, is revealed in a review by Roland Marwitz entitled 'Tratsch auf der Treppe':

Die Ueberproduktion deutscher Verleger an ausländischer Prosa dürfte einen Grund darin haben, daß Verleger und Lektor es sich leicht machen können und nur zu übernehmen brauchen, was jenseits der Grenzen und Meere mit Preisen gekrönt oder auf Bestsellerlisten registriert ist. Auch der Biederstein-Verlag, München, hat bislang nach diesem Rezept erfolgreich gearbeitet und die eigene Urteilslosigkeit auch sogleich bewiesen, als er das Werk eines deutschsprachigen Autors, des Wiener Heimito von Doderer mit einer an Superlativen reichen Prospektpropaganda startete. Von Dostojewskij bis Emil Strauß [sic] gehen

die wertenden Vergleiche des Waschzettels, und es fehlt auch nicht an kategorischen Vorschriften, in welcher Art der Leser diese Wüste der Belanglosigkeit und Langeweile zu durchfurchen habe. Die Komposition erfordert beim Lesen ein mäßiges Tempo, das sich erst im letzten Satz zum Presto steigern darf. Darf! Doderer schildert auf fast tausend Seiten die Schicksale von ein paar Dutzend Leuten in der Zeit von 1910 bis 1911 und 1923 bis 1925, und es gelingt ihm, auch nicht eine Gestalt zu skizzieren, mit der man sich im wirklichen Leben länger als fünf Minuten unterhalten möchte ...<sup>194</sup>

It would, then, be patently misguided to assume, as Schröder and Belloin-Nebhay do,<sup>195</sup> that the reception of what was soon to become one of the monumental reference points in Doderer criticism was merely a straightforward affair. A few representative quotations from the (admittedly rare) negative reviews should suffice to illustrate that the overhasty 'canonization' of Die Strudlhofstiege failed to take into account the complexity of the initial stage of reception, and, as was the case with Grass, based future evaluations on what was merely assumed to be an objectively established order of merit. In her article on 'L'œuvre romanesque de Heimito von Doderer vue par la presse', Belloin-Nebhay is quick to point out that 'tous les grands journaux de l'Allemagne fédérale ... consacrent des articles parfois très nourris au roman de cet inconnu'.<sup>196</sup> What she does not mention is that two of the six articles she cites contain nothing less than scathing attacks on the novel. In the influential Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Helmut Domke writes:

... ein pandektenformig angeschwollener Roman, der die Überlegung nahelegt, ob man analog zum Kilometer nicht den Begriff der Kiloseite prägen sollte ... manchmal hat er [Doderer] ... des Guten zuviel getan, denn über der Fülle von Arabesken wird es oft schwer, dem Zug des Grundmotivs zu folgen.

... Bis das Weberschiffchen Doderers so oft hin und hergeflogen ist, daß sich dieser Roman zu einem Schicksalsgespinnst verdichtet, sind gut 700 Seiten vergangen. Das ist eine starke Geduldprobe, selbst für die Aufmerksamkeit der qualifizierten Leser; denn obendrein tut sich dieser Roman schwer ...<sup>197</sup>

Konrad Stemmer is much more decisive in his invective in the only slightly less influential Berlin Tagesspiegel: 'Was dem Leser da an unterschlagener und vertauschter Briefschaft und an Toleranz gegenüber dem neckischen Gebaren zweier Zwillingschwestern zugemutet wird, gehört in die Kolportage ... Das Augenzwinkern und Flüstern zwischen Bühne und Proszenium ist eines solchen Werkes so unwürdig, wie die nicht seltenen sprachlichen und gedanklichen Nachlässigkeiten ...'<sup>198</sup> Although it must again be emphasized that the positive reviews greatly outnumber the negative ones, it is nevertheless obvious that even Die Strudlhofstiege was anything but an unqualified critical success. Moreover, even as early as 1951, the contours of what might be described - in analogy to the 'Oskar myth' - as a 'Viennese saga myth', were already becoming distinct. In a review of Die erleuchteten Fenster Hartmann Goertz claims that Die Strudlhofstiege was the first volume of a trilogy.<sup>199</sup> Ernst Lewalter suggests that the latter novel is deliberately open-ended:

Hier bei Doderer muß es zwar nicht über den Schluß des Romans hinaus weitergehen, aber es könnte weitergehen, unentwegt weiter ... Es gibt viele solche Figuren [wie Höpfner] in dem großen Roman, die wirken, als seien sie mal eben zu Besuch aus einem anderen Wiener Roman herübergekommen. Anders gesagt: als seien sie skizzierte Hinweise auf künftige oder nachträgliche Vermerke zu ehemaligen Romanhelden Doderers. Die Welt dieses Dichters ist gleichsam an allen Rändern offen!<sup>200</sup>

The perennial thoughts of a 'cycle of novels' are supported by K. Winkler



when he alleges that the main character in both Die Strudlhofstiege and Die erleuchteten Fenster is the former major Melzer, 'den man nach seiner Entlassung zum Amtsrat gemacht hat ...',<sup>201</sup>

The whole reception of Die erleuchteten Fenster suffers greatly under the almost overwhelming influence of the larger novel, which appeared in the same year. More often than not it is mentioned as a mere afterthought in reviews of Die Strudlhofstiege which flooded the feuilletons in 1951. Even those reviewers who chose to dedicate a full-length article to the shorter novel were inclined to share Hugo Loetscher's view that it was merely a 'literarische Dépendance des breit angelegten Romans Die Strudlhofstiege oder Menzel und die Jahre der Tiefe [sic]',<sup>202</sup> although most of them showed a little more familiarity with the titles of Doderer's novels.

Overshadowed as it was by Doderer's monumental Strudlhofstiege, Die erleuchteten Fenster has gone down in literary history as a mere appendage, a 'skurril verschnörkelte Seitentreppe',<sup>203</sup> of Die Strudlhofstiege, if not a sort of humorous private footnote of the author.<sup>204</sup> Maxim Fackler's remarks are typical of the critics' reactions: 'Man sollte die erleuchteten Fenster nicht ohne den großen Roman lesen, weil er allein für sich ein wenig wie Sonnenprotuberanzen ohne das Gestirn wirkt.'<sup>205</sup> And as recently as 1979 the story of Zihl's 'Menschwerdung' was described as a 'Lustspielouvertüre' to the great 'Viennese' novels Die Strudlhofstiege and Die Dämonen.<sup>206</sup> Thus the eminently readable and, above all, linguistically unique novel has been denied the critical attention it surely deserves.

It was with the publication of Die Dämonen in 1956 that the myth of the Viennese saga or what Guenther calls the 'Magnum Opus Austriacum',<sup>207</sup> began to gain in popularity. Once again the spectre of the publishers' advertising handout looms large, for in the 'Vorbemerkung des Verlages

zur Strudlhofstiege' we read: 'Erst als er [Doderer] 1946 nach Wien zurückkehrt, beginnt er sich wieder seinem großen Roman zu widmen. Es entsteht die Strudlhofstiege, die aber nicht die vom Verlag erwartete Fortsetzung des ersten Teiles der Dämonen bringt, sondern einen Auftakt dazu, eine "Rampe", wie Doderer dieses Buch im Zusammenhang mit den Dämonen bezeichnet.'<sup>208</sup> The damage done by Doderer's own perhaps rather playful pun is difficult to underestimate. On the one hand it was easily misconstrued: 'Heimito von Doderers neuestes Werk, zu dem nach seinen eigenen Worten alles Voraufgehende kaum mehr als eine Rampe darstellt ...'<sup>209</sup> On the other hand, Doderer's statement becomes a seminal thought in criticism of the so-called Viennese novels. Without a thought for the fact that Die Dämonen bears the stamp of a very different muse from that which inspired Die Strudlhofstiege, many of Doderer's critics simply lump the two novels together as a single entity. How else could Wolfgang Paulsen arrive at the conclusion that Die Strudlhofstiege would be a mere 'fragment' without its 'continuation',<sup>210</sup> or Hilde Spiel describe the same novel as a 'Fingerübung von freilich nicht zu verachtendem Ausmaß'?<sup>211</sup>

More significantly, the idea of a 'Viennese trilogy' also impairs attempts to interpret Doderer's ensuing publications. In the only full-length study hitherto devoted to Die Merowinger,<sup>212</sup> Liewerscheidt bases his interpretation on what he sees as the differences between this novel and what he calls the 'Wien-Trilogie'.<sup>213</sup> Die Merowinger is a 'kritische und burleske Auseinandersetzung gegen die Unerfüllbarkeit einer Erzählkonzeption und die Unzulänglichkeit der zugehörigen Erzählpraxis',<sup>214</sup> a 'literarische Auseinandersetzung mit einem wiederholt behandelten Thema',<sup>215</sup> i.e. 'deperception'. For Liewerscheidt, then, Die Merowinger is nothing less than a caricature<sup>216</sup> of the 'Viennese trilogy', a concept with which Liewerscheidt claims to have broken new ground, as it is used neither in Doderer's own writings nor in Doderer criticism.<sup>217</sup> Quite

apart from the fact that the idea of a 'Viennese trilogy' can be found in Goertz, Ivask, dell'Agli, Weiß and Kruntorad,<sup>218</sup> Liewerscheidt's interpretation of the three novels as 'zusammengehörige Korrespondenz-partner und Widerpart einer werkgeschichtlichen Auseinandersetzung mit dem Merowinger-Roman',<sup>219</sup> ascribes to the 'Viennese' novels a unity which simply does not exist. This leads Liewerscheidt to the following conclusions:

Dadurch, daß die Dämonie der zweiten Wirklichkeit durch eine Agentur aufrechterhalten werden muß, stempeln die Merowinger die Deperzeptionsthematik zum werkgeschichtlichen Anachronismus.<sup>220</sup>

Menschwerdung und Deperzeption, das Doppelthema der Wien-Trilogie, scheinen ihren literarischen Abschied in der Werkgeschichte Doderers zu erhalten.<sup>221</sup>

Yet, far from being rejected by Doderer as 'anachronistic', the themes and motifs familiar from the so-called Viennese novels were soon to be treated again - much to the critics' delight - in Die Wasserfälle von Slunj and Der Grenzwald. As we shall see in due course, Doderer himself was partly responsible in Die Merowinger for encouraging critics such as Liewerscheidt to interpret the novel in terms of his previous work. However, as Liewerscheidt explicitly states, it is the interrelatedness of genesis, setting, narrated time and (partly) personnel that leads him to the conclusion that his idea of a Viennese trilogy is more than merely a heuristic construction for the purpose of comparison.<sup>222</sup> Here the value of the parallel with Grass becomes evident. For, whereas Grass's critics could talk of the 'Danzig Trilogy' as a 'Gesamtkomplex',<sup>223</sup> acknowledged by the author as 'deeply and organically related to one another - different in many important respects, maybe, but all inspired as it were by the

same muse',<sup>224</sup> Doderer's so-called Viennese trilogy can be linked only on the most superficial of levels, as Liewerscheidt's attempt shows. Moreover, if the publication of Die Dämonen, the novel which more than any other served critics as a model for Doderer's future literary production, was attended by a great deal more controversy than had been the case with Die Strudlhofstiege, the seeds of the discussion are also to be found in the radical difference between the two novels: the overtly political dimension of Die Dämonen. The primacy of the historically documented incident at the centre of Doderer's novel, and the author's subjective, if not idiosyncratic interpretation of the events which culminated in the burning of the Viennese Palace of Justice, provoked, indeed positively invited a passionate response which illustrates that the work which within a few years was to be accorded such epithets as 'classic'<sup>225</sup> did not meet with universal approval even at the initial stage of its reception.

The most profound differences of opinion among Doderer's critics predictably concern the author's portrayal of the riot which led to the burning of the Law Courts, and here, as elsewhere, we can often deduce more about the individual commentator's political stance than about the aesthetic quality of Doderer's novel. Thus Erik Graf Wickenburg declares: 'Eine aufgepeitschte Volksmenge hatte ihn [den Brand] gelegt, ein im tiefsten Grund sinnloses Unterfangen.'<sup>226</sup> The Americans Denver Lindley and Tom Ray talk of 'a crowd of riff-raff',<sup>227</sup> and 'hoodlums',<sup>228</sup> respectively, while Peter Karl Pabisch insists that 'demonic troglodites' were responsible for the burning of the 'Justizpalast'.<sup>229</sup> Paul F. Guenther even goes so far as to suggest that 'students of modern European history would do well to study Doderer's account and illumination of those events which have been all too often interpreted incorrectly.'<sup>230</sup>

The Doderer devotee Hilde Spiel, on the other hand, concedes that the reaction of the Austrian workers was in reality 'nicht ganz unberech-

tigt'.<sup>231</sup> And in an article obviously intended for an East German readership and which was later to be quoted in the East German Lexikon deutschsprachiger Schriftsteller, Arnolt Bronnen launches a bitter attack on Doderer's depiction of what Bronnen describes as a 'Ruhmestag ... für den mutigen Freisinn des Wiener Volkes':<sup>232</sup>

Nun aber trat das ein, was die hohen Klassenrichter nicht erwartet hatten und was jeden Wiener auf seine Stadt stolz machen kann. Auf dieses Schandurteil erhob sich nämlich ganz Wien wie ein Mann und zog vor die Stätte des höchsten Bundesgerichts ... Die Menge forderte die Richter zur Verantwortung, aber die Richter flohen natürlich. Daraufhin drang die Menge in den Palast, um die Akten des Schandprozesses zu vernichten. Die Polizei griff ein. Das erhöhte den Zorn der Menge, die sich zu wehren begann. Man warf mit Pflastersteinen nach den Polizisten und räumte gleichzeitig im Justizpalast auf. Als die Polizei zu schießen begann, schäumte der Volkszorn hoch. Der Justizpalast wurde angezündet, und seine Flammen waren im ganzen Wiener Kessel zu sehen ...

Das waren die Tatsachen, und der Chronist sollte sie achten, um daraus zu lernen und zu lehren. Dann aber wäre wohl der Roman des Heimito von Doderer kein Bestseller in Bonn und Charlottenburg geworden ... Doderers Geschreibsel, das nicht einmal gekonnt ist, sondern in dem es von Sprach- und Stilschnitzern wimmelt, ist eine krasse Verhöhnung des Klassenkampfes der österreichischen Arbeiter.

... Wenn er [Doderer] an diesen 'Dämonscherln' 20 Jahre lang gearbeitet haben soll, so beweist das nur, wie schwer es heute sein muß, etwas gegen die Entwicklung der Welt zum Sozialismus zu schreiben.<sup>233</sup>

Just how controversial a topic the 15th July 1927 is, is perhaps best reflected in the documentation of the symposium held in Vienna on June 15th 1977 as a prelude to the fiftieth anniversary of the riot. The

debate which followed the individual contributions to the symposium was described rather euphemistically by one the participants as 'einigermaßen emotionsgeladen'.<sup>234</sup> Again and again ideological differences determine the speakers' standpoints, but at least Bronnen's rhetoric is put into perspective by Rudolf Neck, who says: 'Die Ereignisse weisen, nach welcher Seite man auch immer blickt, so unerfreuliche Züge auf, daß man kaum von einem Ruhmesblatt der Geschichte unseres Staates sprechen wird.'<sup>235</sup>

Significantly, many of the findings of the Symposium would in fact appear to endorse Doderer's depiction of the events. Thus the Austrian historians are almost unanimous in their evaluation of the 15th July 1927 as a turning point in the political history of the First Republic. The key role which Doderer attributes to women in the riot<sup>236</sup> is borne out by the official police protocols, but is admittedly not entirely undisputed.<sup>237</sup> Statistics appear to indicate that the role traditionally ascribed to women in the riots has been greatly exaggerated. Indeed, the whole tone of the official accounts smacks of petit bourgeois fears and prejudices.<sup>238</sup>

The incident at the University, where Leonhard intervenes instinctively to protect the treasures of the library from the mob,<sup>239</sup> also has its basis in historical fact,<sup>240</sup> although Doderer makes no mention of the fact that the University had become a bastion of reactionary forces.<sup>241</sup> Doderer's familiarity with the source material is further reflected in the report in the novel of how youths slashed the hoses of the fire brigade.<sup>242</sup> And despite the absence of empirical source material to illuminate the role played by the Viennese underworld, eye-witness accounts indicate that at least the burning and looting of the Palace of Justice and the looting of several gunshops are to be attributed to the 'Ruaß'.<sup>243</sup> That even the left-wing press should describe the demonstrators as a 'mob' was perhaps predictable, for by doing so it necessarily exonerated the

workers to a certain extent. It would appear, however, that Doderer did exaggerate the role of the lowest criminal elements in the riot, for, numerically speaking, they constituted a relatively insignificant part of the crowd.<sup>244</sup> Nevertheless, Doderer's claim that the composition of the crowd changed in the course of the day<sup>245</sup> is more or less undisputed. Moreover, Julius Deutsch, at the time leader of the 'Republikanischer Schutzbund', which played such an important part in the riot, is reported to have told Doderer that the latter's was the truest depiction of the day he knew,<sup>246</sup> but this is not at all surprising in view of the warm tribute Doderer pays to the 'Schutzbund' in the novel.

Yet Doderer's account of the demonstration and its consequences is curiously one-sided. Although the Times correspondent claimed in July 1927 that 'in the long run it can make very little difference whether the police blame the [Republican] Defence Guard for breaking down or the socialists accuse the police of maddening the mob by reckless shooting',<sup>247</sup> history has been rather more critical of the unnecessarily brutal intervention by the police. The introduction of mounted police was clearly a decisive factor in the escalation of the violence, and the use of 'Scheibenschußmunition' by the police was plainly uncalled for. Even Vice-Chancellor Hartleb had to concede at the time: 'Natürlich, fallweise hats ausgeschaut wie eine Hasenjagd.'<sup>248</sup> Yet Doderer is singularly reluctant to criticize the police:

... ob nun von einer Pistolen-Kugel der Polizei getroffen oder einem Geschosse ihrer Gegner blieb unerfindlich.<sup>249</sup>

... es war von hier nicht auszumachen, wer da schoss und wem es eigentlich vermeint war.<sup>250</sup>

Doderer's policemen are 'voll verantwortlich handelnde einzelne Beamte',<sup>251</sup> 'ein Instrument des Friedens',<sup>252</sup> 'honette und wohlerzogene Männer',<sup>253</sup>

who are unwilling to believe that the workers could have been responsible for such an uproar.<sup>254</sup> Characteristically, the only explicit report of police brutality is the treatment meted out to one of the 'Ruaß', Protapapadakis, 'woran sie [die Polizei] unseres Erachtens sehr gut getan hat',<sup>255</sup> as narrator Geyrenhoff adds. Moreover, Doderer's moving account of the death of the young policeman Karl Zeitler<sup>256</sup> is factually inaccurate, as the first of the four police casualties, Ferdinand Striegel, was killed by a stray bullet from a fellow policeman's gun,<sup>257</sup> and the other police fatalities occurred only later that evening or the next day.

Nonetheless, in his recently published Doderer and the Politics of Marriage: Personal and Social History in 'Die Dämonen',<sup>258</sup> Bruce Irvin Turner argues that in the novel Doderer 'was not concerned with the faithful reproduction of historically documented details',<sup>259</sup> and that the conflagration in which the novel culminates fulfils a double function:

On the other [sic] hand it depicts, in the real historical sense, the actual fire that took place on July 15. In addition, however, it symbolizes the ascendancy of totalitarian fascism and the World War that ascendancy unleashed. For that reason it is myopic of critics to demand that Doderer's depiction of events coincide exactly with the documented historical version of them. In the novel, the Strudlhofstiege, for instance, the stairway is more than a concrete object to be found in the ninth district of Vienna. It also has a symbolic significance in the private lives of some of the novel's main characters, and is viewed by them accordingly. The same considerations apply to the fire. Doderer's depiction must be accurate enough to bear resemblance to the events of that calamitous day; but it would be a misunderstanding of Doderer's intentions to expect an absolutely accurate and faithful account, especially in the light of the fact that he turns what began as a Socialist demonstration into a symbol for the growing specter of Nazism.<sup>260</sup>



Yet surely, as E.D. Hirsch suggests, 'not only the author's purposes but also the value of those purposes are proper subjects for evaluative criticism.'<sup>261</sup> Moreover, it is one thing to invest a tangible, concrete object such as a Viennese stairway with a variety of highly subjective associations and symbolic overtones: it is quite another wilfully to distort the historically attestable facts of one of the most important events in recent Austrian history. If C.E. Williams is a trifle harsh on Doderer when he describes the latter's account of the riot as a 'travesty of events',<sup>262</sup> one must nevertheless acknowledge that Doderer's depiction of the demonstration and its results is at best highly subjective and idiosyncratic. Williams is surely right when he declares that it cannot validly be objected that Doderer, as a creative writer, has no obligation to observe historical accuracy.<sup>263</sup> For, having chosen to illustrate an interpretation of a major historical incident, the author must be expected to give a convincing, balanced account of this incident, rather than merely a depiction of events from a variety of one-sided perspectives. And, as Gerhard Botz suggests, 'eindimensionale Erklärungen, die Gewalt etwa auf steigende Verelendung der Massen, Frustration, Ideologien oder die Tätigkeit politischer Agenten zurückzuführen suchen, halten einer empirischen Überprüfung nicht stand.'<sup>264</sup> Doderer fails to consider the long-term sociological, political and even juridical factors which made the riot possible. Large scale unemployment with the concomitant fears for job security on the part of those who still had a job, the growing political awareness of the working classes, fed on a diet of undiluted propaganda, which was counterbalanced by an equally partisan 'bourgeois' press, all led to a polarization of political opinion in the young and as yet unstable parliamentary democracy of the First Republic. In addition to this, the Austrian juridical system had a long history of controversial acquittals culminating in the exculpation of Nelly Grosavescu

on the eve of the 'Schattendorf trial', a verdict which also provoked demonstrations. The Schattendorf acquittals themselves were not so unexpected as we are led to believe, but merely the final link in a chain of similarly intolerable incidents resulting from an outmoded conception of justice and a palpably inadequate jury system.<sup>265</sup>

The main weaknesses of Doderer's Dämonen, then, are twofold. On the one hand, the author allows his ideological message to take precedence over aesthetic considerations, so that reviewers and commentators are sent scurrying to the history books to check on the readily ascertainable facts. The dichotomy between these historically documented facts and Doderer's one-sided portrayal of events leads to the predictable - and in this case justifiable - attacks by left-wing critics who concentrate more on the politics than on the aesthetics of the novel. Doderer's own credo, 'Der wahre Leser sucht keinen "Roman des Eisens" (der Stadt, des Radios, der Politik, des Goldes, des Seekrieges, der Jugendbewegung, der Altertumsforschung, des Anilins), sondern eben einen - Roman',<sup>266</sup> is scarcely tenable here, for it is the author who has chosen to make a political statement in an eminently political novel, and this invites criticism of a non-literary nature.

On the other hand, the aesthetic quality of the work itself suffers, too, insofar as the series of little fates and little histories which Doderer selects to illustrate his thesis of the irrational forces which sparked off the disintegration of Austrian society in the inter-war years, can be at best tangentially linked to the incident which for Doderer represents the 'Cannae of Austrian freedom'.<sup>267</sup> Turner argues that Doderer's novel points forward 'to the post-War era of the Grand Coalition and the final attainment of peace',<sup>268</sup> since René's 'apoliticism is paralleled by the Grand Coalition politics of the fifties',<sup>269</sup> and the rash of marriages at the end of the novel represent 'the relative social harmony

of the postwar period, which, because people and parties were weary of waging ideological combat, could be termed "apolitical" in Doderer's sense'.<sup>270</sup> Yet it is as difficult to believe this as it is to accept Turner's claim that the 'torture' of the women as described in the putative late-medieval manuscript 'seems roughly commensurate with the persecution, and even later extermination of Jews',<sup>271</sup> or that in Herzka's attempts to perfect his own private garden of eroticism Doderer traces the 'origins of the concentration camp'.<sup>272</sup> Equally unconvincing is Turner's contention that, 'politically speaking', Leonhard and Mary K. embody 'coalition made viable by moderation',<sup>273</sup> and Doderer's 'vision of the kind of political cooperation required to defuse future time bombs'.<sup>274</sup> On the contrary, Turner's convoluted attempts to discern parallels between Die Dämonen and social and political reality reveal all too clearly that Doderer does not succeed in transcending the narrow confines of the private sphere, which is presented so much more convincingly in Die Strudlhofstiege. By merely appending a political message to the novel, Doderer fails to infuse the personal fates with a convincing and generally relevant historical significance, and produces instead a badly integrated assemblage of layers of meaning slightly reminiscent of the uneasy marriage between 'Dostoevsky and Agatha Christie' found in Ein Mord den jeder begeht. Despite Turner's assertion that it is Doderer's hope that 'the "demons" of private obsessions can be prevented from turning into public possession, before ideological polarization leads to a fiery holocaust of atomic warfare',<sup>275</sup> there is some justification in Peter Coulmas's reaction to Die Dämonen in a major review broadcast by the 'Bayrischer Rundfunk':

Nur - was ich an Doderers Werk vermisse, das sind die Dämonen. Mit dem Titel wird ein Wechsel ausgestellt, den der Verfasser nicht einlöst. Der Leser wird begierig gestimmt, von dem un-

heilvollen Walten der zerstörenden Kräfte Kunde zu bekommen - aber er erfährt nichts davon. Er wird an die beklemmenden Zwangsläufigkeiten von Dostojewski erinnert - aber er erlebt nur die heitere Süsse einer österreichischen Gesellschafts-Beschreibung. Er erwartet die zuckenden Höllenflammen des heraufdämmernden Hitlerreiches wenigstens den Horizont ansengen zu spüren, aber er wird 1300 Seiten lang im zarten Pastell gehätschelt ... Er [der Roman] hält nicht, was er verspricht. Es ist ein Werk der geistigen Hochstapelei.

... Wir werden nicht nur enttäuscht, wir werden regelrecht getäuscht. Wir machen uns die Mühe, uns durch ein Riesenwerk hindurchzulesen ..., wir werden für diese Mühe aber nicht mit entsprechendem Gewinn belohnt. Wir lesen reizvolle Feuilletons, weise Sentenzen, einfallsreiche Aperçues, aber wir bekommen nicht die Diagnose der Zeit, auf den [sic] wir Anspruch haben. Wir begegnen nicht den Dämonen.

... Es sind harmlose Zeitgenossen, herzlich undämonisch allesamt, ja nicht einmal Werkzeuge einer unter- oder hintergründig wirkenden dämonischen Macht. Weder Treibende noch Getriebene. Sie stehen abseits vom Geschehen und vertreiben sich mit heiterem Sinn ihr wienerisches Dasein. Beschaulich am Graben. Lebensfroh im Café - jedenfalls soweit es geht. Jeder mit seinen kleinen Sorgen befasst.

... Nun fragt sich auch der geduldigste Leser: was haben die Unsrigen mit dem Aufstand eigentlich zu tun? An diesen Menschen ist die Ordnung der Gesellschaft offenbar nicht zerbrochen. So harmlos ist nicht der Lauf der Geschichte und nicht so in Pastell gemalt. Die 30 Millionen Toten des 2. Weltkrieges haben nicht die heiteren Harlekine aus Doderers Wiener Schaubude auf dem Gewissen. Unser Schicksal wird durch tiefere, unheimlichere Kräfte gestaltet, als Doderer zu erfassen vermag, nämlich wirklich durch dämonische Kräfte.

... Die Welt ist aus den Fugen? Ach was? Das ist bei Shakespeare der Fall, aber nicht bei Doderer - trotz aller großen Worte! Die Dämonen sind los? Ach wo, das erleben wir in St. Petersburg bei Dostojewski - in Wien wurschtelt man fort.

'Felix Austria.'<sup>276</sup>

It is, ironically, the lighthearted Viennese affability which Coulmas here objects to, that becomes an immutable part of Doderer's image, and this is clearly endorsed by the reviewers' reaction to Die Merowinger. So overwhelming is Doderer's image as a Viennese novelist that here too, as was the case with the 'non-Viennese' Ein Mord den jeder begeht, the novel is explicitly identified with Vienna. Thus Humbert Fink claims that Doderer again idealizes the idea of 'modo austriaco', and that despite the fact that the story is set for the most part in Franconia.<sup>277</sup> Traugott declares: 'Wahrscheinlich ist dem norddeutschen Leser manches sehr Wienerische befremdlich - und dies, obgleich ja das Ganze bei uns, in Franken hier, spielen soll, welches seinerseits fremd und exotisch wirkt, wie das Böhmen oder Zypern in einer Shakespeare-Komödie.'<sup>278</sup> Edwin Hartl ironically suggests that Childerich quite obviously spends most of his time in Vienna,<sup>279</sup> whereas Ernst Stein is more inclined to imply that Doderer's portrayal of Central Franconia could easily be confused with a depiction of provincial Austria.<sup>280</sup> Georg Schmid also remarks that Doderer's description of the environs of Würzburg is in reality a description of Vienna.<sup>281</sup> Somewhat tongue-in-cheek, Schmid adds: '... auch gehört eine Passage auf p.278 eigentlich "von rechts wegen" in einen Wiener Roman Doderers.'<sup>282</sup> In one of these Viennese novels, the chief protagonist Geyrenhoff says of himself: 'Da saß ich nun, wie eine Spinne im Zentrum des Netzes.'<sup>283</sup> Elsewhere Geyrenhoff remarks: 'Hier war ein Gespinnst, das ich hatte beherrschen wollen. Nun durchwuchs es mich.'<sup>284</sup> Like the spider caught in its own web, Doderer is unable to extricate himself from an image he himself is undoubtedly partly responsible for having created and with which he is almost universally identified: that of the amiable raconteur of large-scale novels set in Vienna.

There can be little doubt that Meidinger-Geise is misleading when

she claims that no less a novelist than Doderer shocks us with his Die Merowinger,<sup>285</sup> for, as dell'Agli rightly points out, it is not the extravagance of Doderer's story itself that so perplexes the critics - modern literature and the horrors of two World Wars have made us more or less immune to this kind of shock - their consternation stems much rather from the realization that certain elements which have hitherto been apparently fixed points in Doderer's work are now missing.<sup>286</sup> It is not only the locality of Doderer's novels that the critics appear determined to establish as a permanent fixture in Doderer's writings. What has vitiated the reception of Die Merowinger more than anything else is the prescriptive criticism seen at its mildest in Meidinger-Geise:

Er [der Roman] scheidet gewiß die Geister, ja er kann jene Leser abstoßen, die gern einen Dichter, von dem sie einmal einen sicheren Eindruck gewannen, festlegen wollen in seinem Schaffen. Doderer liebte es seit je, zuweilen auszuwetzen in den Bereich des aufreizend Skurrilen, so geschehen zwischen den großen Romanen im Wiener Milieu, in denen epochale Fragen aufgeworfen werden. Die Merowinger scheinen nun der bisherige Höhepunkt solcher Ausbrüche - man möchte auch fast sagen, damit sollte es genug sein.<sup>287</sup>

One does not have to delve too deeply between the lines to realize that Meidinger-Geise herself only just tolerates Doderer's 'outbursts'. Much less tolerant is Karl Boegner, who categorically prescribes a return to the Doderer of the 'Viennese Novels':

Doch scheint uns der Autor mit diesem Buch die letzte Grenze der Lesbarkeit in dieser Richtung erreicht zu haben. Weiter geht es hier nicht mehr, auch dem sehr wohlwollenden Leser wird es manchmal schwer, bei der Stange zu bleiben. Auf keinen Fall sollte man die Merowinger als erstes Buch des Dichters lesen.

Nur gut durchtrainierte 'Doderologen' werden bis zum Schluß durchhalten. Die Möglichkeiten der hochbarocken Seite hin scheitern bis aufs letzte ausgeschöpft. Hoffen wir, daß uns Heimito von Doderer als nächstes Werk wieder einen Klassiker schenkt, einen neuen Trieb des Hauptstammes, der mit der Strudlhofstiege und den Dämonen zu den schönsten Bäumen im Garten der Dichtung zählt.<sup>288</sup>

It is clear from Boegner's comments that the Viennese novels have become the 'classical' canon according to which all Doderer's works are judged. This would be quite justifiable if it were limited to aesthetic criteria, but this is rarely the case. On the contrary, what Durzak says of Grass is yet again true of Doderer:

Die ausdrückliche Betonung des neuen, bisher bei Grass ungewohnten Sujets hätte eigentlich auch die Möglichkeit erwägen müssen, daß Grass dieses Thema mit neuen formalen Mitteln zu bewältigen sucht. Statt dessen werden jedoch Grass' erzählerische Möglichkeiten von seinen bisherigen Romanen eindeutig definiert. Das führt im Verlauf der Kritik dazu, daß die neue Erzählweise ständig im Vergleich mit der der Blechtrommel vor allem abgewertet wird.<sup>289</sup>

Far from attempting to come to terms with what dell'Agli calls 'l'altro Doderer',<sup>290</sup> his reviewers look back with a hint of nostalgia and note with regret the apparent demise of that Viennese urbanity which appeared to be the hallmark of Doderer's unmistakable style. Hans Kricheldorf's remarks are representative of this trend:

So gewinnt denn das Opus einen unter dem, was sonst zu lesen ist, einzigartigen Rang, auch wenn man es im Vergleich zu Vorangegangenen mehr als Opusculum anzusehen geneigt ist und, leise bedauernd, jene Melancholie und jene Würde ('more

austriaco-hispanico') vermisst, die in dem großen Doppelepos zu den beherrschenden Elementen gehören.

Die beschriebene Familie des Freiherrn von Bartenbruch hat nur lose Beziehungen zu Österreich. Die Austriazität - wenn dieses Wort zum Lobe des Dichters erlaubt ist - wird nur flüchtig sichtbar. Antaios hat den viennesischen Mutterboden des IX. Bezirks diesmal verlassen.<sup>291</sup>

Not even the re-appearance of the almost ubiquitous Dr. Döblinger is enough to satisfy Emil Franzel's demands for a continuation of what he considers the cycle of novels set in Vienna:

Wer nur alle Lustren einen großen Roman schreibt wie Doderer, hat den Vorteil, von seinen Lesern mit Spannung erwartet zu werden. Man erwartet aber nach dem Gesetz, nach dem Heimito von Doderer auf der Strudlhofstiege angetreten ist, einen Wiener Roman, ein Weiterspinnen der großen Schicksalsmotive, die er in den Dämonen angeschlagen hat. In dem Bewußtsein, darauf wieder fünf Jahre warten zu müssen, legt man den totalen Unsinn ein wenig enttäuscht, wenn nicht verärgert aus der Hand. Viele werden ihn wohl gar nicht bis Ende lesen und sich gefoppt vorkommen. Was würde das Publikum sagen, wenn Karajan für Armstrong einspringen und die Jazztrompete blasen oder wenn Guareschi plötzlich wie Hemingway schreiben würde? Hoffen wir also, dem Dr. Döblinger nächstens, und nicht erst in fünf Jahren, wieder zwischen Strudlhofstiege und Türkenschanzpark, am besten wohl in einem alten Liechtenthaler Hof bei Kaffee mit Obers und Guglhupf begegnen zu können, und wenn der 'Rittmeister' dabei wäre, soll es uns besonders viel Spaß machen. Sie könnten sich dann ruhig ein Weilchen über Childerich und die Merowinger unterhalten, aber nicht zu lang!<sup>292</sup>

In 1893, after one unsuccessful attempt to break off from writing the Sherlock Holmes stories, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle finally had his hero killed off at the hands of the iniquitous Professor Moriarty in The Ad-



venture of the Final Problem. The public outcry was overwhelming. Doyle was 'deluged with letters of protest from grief-stricken readers and heard of many who wept, while sober London businessmen took to wearing mourning bands'.<sup>293</sup> Finally, in the spring of 1903, Doyle consented to restore Holmes to life. The creation had outgrown the creator. Even if one can scarcely imagine sober Viennese critics wearing mourning bands to mark the passing on of 'Die Unsrigen', the parallel is nevertheless undeniable. Yet Mohler is surely right to suggest that it would have been unwise of Doderer to cling to the figures and localities of the 'Viennese novels' and to try to recreate this epic world a third time.<sup>294</sup> The perennial calls for Doderer to write a cycle of Viennese novels fail to consider the importance for Doderer of the temporal distance between the events he portrays and the completion of his novels. Without this distance the author would not have had the necessary psychological distance to differentiate between the relevant and the superfluous in his analysis of human behaviour. Despite the numerous comparisons, Doderer was clearly not 'le Balzac viennois'.<sup>295</sup> Doderer himself categorically rejects any attempt to analyse events as they happen:

Die Gegenwart des Schriftstellers ist seine wiedergekehrte Vergangenheit; er ist ein Aug', dem erst sehenswert erscheint, was spontan in die historische Distanz rückt.<sup>296</sup>

Der 'Zeitroman' ist keine zeitnahe Literatur, sondern überhaupt keine: Zeitung zwischen Buchdeckeln.<sup>297</sup>

Mit Ereignissen gleichzeitig zu schreiben, würde, anständig aufgefaßt, eine Schreibfläche erfordern, die so groß ist wie der umgebende, überschaubare, apperzipierbare Lebens-Ausschnitt. Wer kann wissen, ob nicht irgendeine Velleität, deren Notation man sich billig glaubt schenken zu können, die wahre Sprengladung der Zukunft seltsam verklausuliert in sich enthält, eine Sprengladung, die vielleicht als unbedeutende Karte im Spiel

noch durch viele Hände und Umwege wird gehen müssen eh ihr entscheidender und bis dahin ganz undiskutabler [sic] Kern fertig und überraschend aus der platzenden Frucht rollt?! Es ist ohne weiteres klar, daß hier alles, durchaus und überhaupt alles Erreichbare, aufgeschrieben werden muß. Da die auswählende Gedächtnis-Distanz fehlt, wird hier die absoluteste Sinnlosigkeit sozusagen zur Ehrensache für den Schreiber, wenn er anständig ist; und wenn er ein lustiger, raffinierter Kerl ist, dann wird er vielleicht die Reize eines pointillistischen Verismus, welche sich hier erschließen mögen, eine Zeitlang genießen und dann mit der ganzen Geschichte aufhören oder bestimmt in's Narrenhaus kommen.<sup>298</sup>

Given such sentiments on Doderer's part, it is more than obvious that a cycle of novels along the lines envisaged by many critics could never be seriously contemplated by the author. Nevertheless, with the publication of his next novel, Die Wasserfälle von Slunj, Doderer satisfied the demands of such critics to such an extent that one even went so far as to talk of the 'Wiener Tetralogie',<sup>299</sup> comprising the so-called 'Viennese' novels of the 1950s and Die Wasserfälle von Slunj. And it is to the latter that we must turn our attention now to illustrate fully the expectations and demands of Doderer's reviewers.

## V The 'Sigh of Relief'

After the publication of such a novel as Die Merowinger, Doderer might have been expected to follow the line which had characterized the later stories in Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen and had shocked so many

critics of Die Merowinger. Yet an examination of Doderer's predictably highly idiosyncratic, and at the time much discussed conception of the function of the literary critic might lead one to the opposite conclusion. For Doderer describes the critic as nothing less than the 'Mittelpunkt des literarischen Kosmos',<sup>300</sup> a 'Zentral-Sonne der Intelligenz',<sup>301</sup> indeed the father of all literature.<sup>302</sup> Doderer even ascribes to the critic a constitutive role in the production of literature:

Der Kritiker will, daß Kunst sei. Fehlt sie, so wird er sie provozieren. Nicht eine Armut an Talenten verursacht die wiederkehrenden Vacua in der Literatur, sondern das Fehlen eigentlicher kritischer Begabungen. Talente sind immer in Fülle vorhanden. Aber was nützt das, wenn der literarische Kosmos ohne Mittelpunkt ist, ohne Zentralsonne der Intelligenz! Ja, der große Kritiker wird, wenn ihm die Kunstobjekte fehlen, ohne die er seine polemische Lebens-Spannung nicht aufrecht zu halten vermag, häufig in die Vergangenheit tauchen, oder sich, in bezug auf Gegenwärtiges, einem Als-Ob ergeben (als ob vorbildliche Literatur auch jetzt entstehen könnte), und so das unverrückbare Maß über den Wassern der Zeit halten: wissend, daß eben dies die einzig mögliche Wegbereitung für's Kommende ist, welches jenes Maß wieder wird erfüllen können. Und es wird kommen: von des kritischen Geistes gewaltiger Faszination evoziert!<sup>303</sup>

Are we to take it, then, that it was on account of the negative reaction to Die Merowinger on the part of the critics that Doderer was induced to return to a setting and narrative style much more in keeping with the critics' expectations, in the first part of the proposed tetralogy Roman No.7? After all, Doderer explicitly says: 'Ein einziger Kritiker genügt, um die Literatur einer ganzen Zeit zu orten.'<sup>304</sup> Elsewhere, the author assures us that it is the critic who possesses the 'Geheimnis des Maßes'.<sup>305</sup> Yet it would be quite erroneous to equate Doderer's

theory with the reality of his attitude towards the critic. Edwin Hartl assures us that Doderer was susceptible to the most superficial of compliments but unwilling to accept even the most intelligent criticism of his work,<sup>306</sup> and this is endorsed by Herbert Eisenreich: 'Über dumme oder sonstwie üble Rezensionen hat er [Doderer] zwar nie geschimpft, aber die albernsten Lobhudeleien wußte er auswendig und rühmte sie bis in die von ihm geflissentlich ignorierten Stilblüten.'<sup>307</sup> Further evidence of Doderer's sensitivity towards adverse criticism can be found in his plea to Gütersloh in April 1951 to phone the Weltpresse immediately to reserve the right to review Die Strudlhofstiege, as Doderer puts it, 'damit das Werk nicht in die unrichtigen Hände gerät'.<sup>308</sup>

This almost servile dependence on the critics must not, however, be allowed to overshadow the fact that Doderer was acutely aware on the one hand of the conspicuous lack of the type of critic he describes above<sup>309</sup> and, on the other, of the pernicious influence of the inadequate critic. It is no coincidence that Doderer quotes Günther Busch's aphorism as the motto of his essay Das Mark der Kritik: 'In Sachen Literatur führt nichts so schnell zur vollständigen Barbarei wie die Ignoranz der Deuter.'<sup>310</sup> Michael Scharang's objections to Doderer's conception of the significance of the critic - that one look at history is enough to convince us that critics have consistently favoured what most people would now consider inferior aesthetic products<sup>311</sup> - might be valid, but he tends to take Doderer at face value and imply that Doderer is talking about the reality of literary criticism when in fact it is ideal literary criticism that he is here dealing with. It is perhaps churlish to mention that Doderer's conception of how things ought to be stands in sharp contradistinction to his own maxim: 'Aus dem Seienden lesen und nicht aus dem Sollenden interpretieren';<sup>312</sup> but the dichotomy between theory and practice is yet another indication of the dangers of

interpreting the author in terms of his own theory. Indeed, privately, Doderer tended to talk of the critic as something of a necessary evil.<sup>313</sup> Moreover, the fact that Doderer worked on Die Merowinger and Die Wasserfälle von Slunj simultaneously is final proof that the author went his own way quite regardless of his own theory of the importance of the critic, and totally uninfluenced by what the critics of Die Merowinger had to say.

Turning to the reviews of Die Wasserfälle von Slunj, one is immediately struck by the number of critics who are at pains to establish a connection between the new work and the older, 'Viennese' novels. Armin Mohler, for instance, writes: 'Die Strudlhofstiege war Doderers Bunte Steine, die Dämonen sein Nachsommer - der Roman No.7 ist sein Witiko.'<sup>314</sup> Helmut Olles, on the other hand, maintains: 'Der Ausgleich ist weniger gelungen als in den großen Wien-Romanen, das erzählerische Subjekt doch wohl zu eigenmächtig. Auch könnte man sich die Wasserfälle von Slunj umfangreicher angelegt denken, in der Art der Strudlhofstiege und der Dämonen.'<sup>315</sup> Die Merowinger, on the other hand, is either diligently ignored or retrospectively dismissed by the reviewers as a mere cathartic by-product:

Leser und Freunde des Dichters mögen ein wenig betroffen die ... Merowinger aus der Hand gelegt haben. Der Roman war ein Sprung ins Groteske, in die Farce, ins Absurde ... Solche Ausbrüche im dichterischen Schaffen sind oft notwendig, um sich zu befreien. Heute spürt man, daß der Exkurs des satirischen Werkes der Weg war, der die Sprache Doderers zu einer wunderbaren Leichtigkeit verhalf ...<sup>316</sup>

In spite of the tragic ending, this is again a novel of humorous understanding and forgiving, as if the sardonic satire of the Merowinger had been written by the author decades ago and not simultaneously with the Wasserfälle von Slunj!<sup>317</sup>

Die Wasserfälle von Slunj ... zeigt, wie sehr das komische

More significantly, one also becomes aware of an almost audible 'sigh of relief' on the part of the critics now that Doderer has apparently turned his back on the new line established in Die Merowinger. In a review with the perhaps unintentionally ambiguous title 'Ein schöner Wurf rückwärts', Bernhard Häußermann declares:

Mit jugendlicher Frische setzt der 67jährige Österreicher Heimito von Doderer die Tradition des vielfach für überlebt erklärten klassischen europäischen Romanes fort. Seit vor zwölf Jahren die Strudlhofstiege erschien, der dann bald die Dämonen folgten, kennt man ihn als einen Mann, der zu erzählen versteht, als hätte es nie eine Krise des Romans gegeben ... Es [Die Wasserfälle von Slunj] ist, im Gegensatz zu Doderers vor Jahresfrist erschienenen grotesken Merowingern, ein aufs leichteste und genaueste dahinmusiziertes Buch.<sup>319</sup>

In a short essay introducing the serialization of Die Wasserfälle in the FAZ the anonymous critic writes: 'Weit entfernt sind wir hier von der Prügelei und blutigen Metzelei der totalen Familie der Merowinger. Das Apokalyptische und Groteske, das dort die Komödien beherrscht, das Scherzo Barbaro ist hier ... einem in jeder Beziehung feineren Element gewichen ...'<sup>320</sup> The 'sigh of relief' is even more perceptible in the review of Die Wasserfälle in Welt der Bücher, where the anonymous reviewer only now allows himself to give full vent to the fears which have obviously haunted him since the publication of Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen:

In das Vergnügen, das Doderers letztes Werk, Die Merowinger, bereitete ..., mischte sich auch eine leise Bangnis. Sollte

der Autor der großen Wien-Romane Die Strudlhofstiege und Die Dämonen ... deren Geist und Stil hinter sich gelassen und mit den Merowingern seinem bisherigen Werk eine Art negatives Schlußzeichen hinzugefügt haben? Doch die Wasserfälle von Slunj ... zeigen uns wieder den alten Doderer der großen Romane, bei dem einer gewissen Negativität (in vielen Formen) zwar Raum verstattet ist, wobei diese aber in dem Ganzen aufgehoben wird. Diese Negativität, die ihre Geschichte in der österreichischen Literatur hat (Nestroy, teilweise Grillparzer, Karl Kraus), hatte sich schon in Doderers Erzählsammlung Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen einmal selbständig gemacht; dann eben fand sie Gestalt in den doch zum Teil brutal-komischen und höchst böseartigen Merowingern, in welchem Roman 'Wut' und 'Grimm' zu durch ironische Spiegelung und Distanzierung gewiß etwas abgeschwächten Grundaffekten wurden. Hätte Doderer weiter so geschrieben, so wäre das vor allem deshalb zu bedauern gewesen, weil die Haltung der Lebenspositivität bei ihm literarisch weitaus reicher und fruchtbarer ist.<sup>321</sup>

So great is the relief on the part of some reviewers that Doderer has apparently chosen to turn his back on the outrageous eccentricities that play such an important role in Die Merowinger, that they make a valiant attempt to establish Die Wasserfälle von Slunj as the start of another new phase in the author's artistic development. Thus Meidinger-Geise declares: 'Eben noch diskutiert man Doderers Merowinger, da überrascht der Autor mit einer Gabe, die nur einen neuen Anfang darstellt ...'<sup>322</sup> Yet in the same breath the reviewer feels obliged to point out that the new novel also points backwards towards the so-called Viennese novels: 'aber auch zu den vorangegangenen Werken mit altösterreichischer Weite und großangelegter Schilderung von Gesellschaftspflichten und -gedanken Die Strudlhofstiege, Die Dämonen führt der neue Roman ...'<sup>323</sup> Armin Mohler, on the other hand, is much more decisive in his claim that a distinct change in tone can be perceived in Doderer's

latest novel: 'Dieses erste Buch des Roman Nr. 7 zeigt, daß der Autor, der ein für alle Mal auf einen bestimmten Ton festgelegt zu sein schien, einen neuen Ton gefunden hat. Es hat den herben, großflächigen Reiz eines Alterswerkes - was andere Autoren, man denke an Benn und noch lebende Zeitgenossen Doderers, nie erreicht haben.'<sup>324</sup> Herbert Eisenreich, however, concedes that Die Wasserfälle von Slunj begins in much the same vein as Die Strudlhofstiege and that for the next two or three hundred pages the reader asks himself whether Die Merowinger really was nothing more than a mere escapade.<sup>325</sup> Yet Eisenreich then goes on to conclude that Doderer's latest novel represents nothing less than a perfect synthesis between the 'Viennese' novels (where Doderer had totally avoided tragedy) and Die Merowinger (where the novelist had portrayed what Eisenreich sees as 'die nackte Tragik'<sup>326</sup>). Quite apart from the fact that it is difficult to discern anything even remotely resembling real tragedy in Die Merowinger, Donald Clayton's death in Die Wasserfälle von Slunj is scarcely more tragic than Mary K.'s accident in Die Strudlhofstiege or Gyurkicz's or Karl Zeitler's untimely demise in Die Dämonen. One reviewer's description of Doderer's last completed novel as 'heitere Tragik' from Austria is surely much more accurate.<sup>327</sup> Moreover, Eisenreich himself characteristically has to admit: 'durch weite Passagen gemahnt uns der Inhalt der Wasserfälle recht sehr an die früheren Romane.'<sup>328</sup>

If we take a closer look at Doderer's last full-length novel, we must concede that much of the autobiographical ballast of the previous works - including Die Merowinger - has been cast aside. In addition, the 'Regie des Lebens'<sup>329</sup> has taken over the function of the omnipotent authorial voice which had till then lurked behind (or sometimes quite obtrusively in front of) the narrator as a puppeteer-in-chief. The new novel is furthermore somewhat more taut and economical in construction



than its predecessors, but apart from this, very little has changed, particularly on the level of subject-matter and setting. One must ultimately agree with Edwin Hartl's conclusion: 'Mit den - für Doderer-Leser schon gewohnten - Sprüngen von Zeit zu Zeit findet man manche vielleicht allzu vertraute Szenen aus dem alten Österreich. Diese reizenden Altwiener und grauslichen Hausmeister sind am Ende ein wenig zu wenig neu für einen neuen Doderer.'<sup>330</sup>

Yet it is precisely the return to the 'old' Doderer whom so many readers and reviewers have obviously grown to love, that meets with the approval of the critics - and this is surely only conceivable in the wake of such an 'atypical' novel as Die Merowinger. This is endorsed by the reaction of those critics who had explicitly expressed their anxiety over the new line Doderer appeared to have adopted in Die Merowinger. It is the return of some familiar motifs that meets with the approbation of Hans Kricheldorf: 'Mit Vergnügen registriert man, daß die Umrisse junger Herren aus gutem Hause und reifer Damen dem Verfasser auch diesmal am leibhaftigsten geraten.'<sup>331</sup> Similarly, in a review with the paradigmatic title 'Ein klassischer Doderer', Karl Boegner notes with more than a hint of satisfaction and relief: 'Wer nach der Lektüre der Merowinger, diesem skurril-genialen Außenseiter, die Befürchtung hatte, daß der Meister nun an die Grenze des noch Lesbaren entteilt sei, der wird an den Wasserfällen von Slunj seine helle Freude haben. Hier ist ein Doderer, der sich würdig an die Strudlhofstiege ... anschließt.'<sup>332</sup> Yet again the canon according to which Doderer's post-1956 publications are judged is palpably obvious.

In view of the fact that Doderer's return to a more traditional narrative style might conceivably be regarded as a retrograde step in his literary development, it is not surprising that it has been suggested that Doderer was subsequently faced with 'accusations of artistic inept-

itude'.<sup>333</sup> Yet there is remarkably little evidence of this in the reviews of Die Wasserfälle von Slunj. On the contrary, Emil Franzel's remarks are symptomatic of the critical response: 'So sehr man sich an der tollen, ins Burleske gesteigerten Satire über die "Merowinger" amüsiert haben möchte, so erfreut ist man, nun wieder einen "echten" Doderer lesen zu dürfen.'<sup>334</sup> Far from criticizing the author for returning to the style and setting of his earlier novels, Franzel eagerly welcomes back the familiar motifs so sorely missed in Die Merowinger: 'Großartig sind wieder gerade die Nebenfiguren gezeichnet ... Einigermassen unerquicklich sind wieder allerhand "dicke Damen" und die erotischen Fäden zwischen halben Buben und alten Weibern (Doderer hat einen Anti-Lolita-Komplex). Alles in allem ist dies ... wieder ein meisterhaft gebauter und erzählter und den literarischen Durchschnitt turmhoch überragender wirklicher Roman.'<sup>335</sup> Once again what Durzak says of Grass is equally valid for Doderer: 'Soweit Beziehungen [zu den "früheren großen Romanen"] in Form vertrauter Motive vorhanden sind, partizipiert der neue Roman gewissermaßen an der Vollkommenheit des früheren.'<sup>336</sup>

Nevertheless, Doderer's step backwards towards what for many represents his 'real' or what one might call 'Viennese' style was still not enough to satiate some critics' appetite for a mere reworking in a fresh guise of the author's previous successes. Thus Helmut Uhlig notes with regret that by tautening his prose Doderer has sacrificed his 'alte Behäbigkeit',<sup>337</sup> and in an article which in many respects encapsulates the prejudices of Doderer's critics and which is worth quoting at length, Johannes Kleinstück peremptorily declares:

Mit der Strudlhofstiege ... und den Dämonen ... setzte Doderer die Tradition des europäischen Gesellschaftsromans fort ... Die Strudlhofstiege bildete, wie Doderer selbst gesagt hat, die 'Rampe' für die Dämonen, die damit zum Hauptwerk erklärt wer-

den. Die meisten seiner Leser werden bestätigen, daß er in ihnen das ihm Gemäße verwirklicht und vollendet hat - so vollendet, daß ein Weitergehen kaum möglich, vielleicht auch nicht ratsam erschien. Trotzdem entwarf er als Sechziger noch den Plan zu einem neuen Riesenbau, den er Roman No. 7 nannte.<sup>338</sup>

Kleinstück scrupulously avoids mentioning the atypical Die Merowinger and is equally careful not to give an evaluative assessment of Roman No. 7.

Warum hat Doderer weitergeschrieben und sich dadurch der Gefahr ausgesetzt, am Maßstab des schon Erreichten gemessen zu werden? Als ich ihn im September 1965 besuchte, kam das Gespräch auf die Wasserfälle von Slunj und er bemerkte: 'So stelle ich mir einen Roman vor' - er glaubte also, sich selbst noch zu verbessern, sich selbst zu überbieten ... Ob das Ganze die Dämonen übertroffen hätte, muß dahingestellt bleiben ...<sup>339</sup>

Equally significant are the motifs whose absence Kleinstück finds it necessary to remark on: 'Es fehlen ... hier - jeder Fortschritt bringt Verlust mit sich - Kabinettstücke wie das allen Kennern wohlvertraute "Café Kaunitz", pralle Randfiguren wie die Prostituierte Anny Gräven ...',<sup>340</sup>

As early as 1951 Doderer noted: 'Jeder Künstler ist wohl zu der Anmaßung gezwungen, daß wesentlicher sei, wohin er gehe als woher er komme. Die Kunstgeschichte ist dann oft umgekehrter Meinung.'<sup>341</sup> That these very apt words are also true of Doderer's critics after 1956, is self-evident. Just how profound the reviewers' preoccupation with Doderer's past successes was, is perhaps best mirrored in Otto F. Beer's claim that the eponymous Waterfalls of Slunj are nothing but 'eine ins Hydrische übertragene Strudelhofstiege [sic]'.<sup>342</sup>

If the first part of the proposed tetralogy Roman No.7 could with some justification be described as retrogressive, particularly in terms of some of the motifs and the style, the same could certainly not be said of the posthumously published fragment of Der Grenzwald. Only superficially does Doderer return here to the scene of his first full-length novel, Das Geheimnis des Reichs; a comparison of the two works illustrates perfectly the length and breadth of the path traversed by the author in the course of his artistic life. Moreover, a comparison of the two parts of Roman No.7 itself reveals that even in the last few years of his life Doderer succeeded in making such advances in narrative technique that his by now familiar rapturous cries of exaltation as what he regarded as yet another poetic rebirth approached, were in this case not without substance:

Vergleichsweise hab' ich eigentlich noch nie einen Roman geschrieben.<sup>343</sup>

R7/II ist als symphonisches Werk fast mein erstes. Ungeheure Einbrüche von in Schutt verwandelter, bisher für fest gehaltener (nicht so ganz - nur gegoltener!) Materie. Anfang.<sup>344</sup>

R7/II liegt in einem neuen Leben und wird dort erst betretbar.<sup>345</sup>

Die Mitte kreiselt zusammen und wird mein Gegenstand: wenn je, dann wird dies mein Buch, das meinen Lebensentscheid dokumentiert, und meine Abkehr vom deperzeptiven Aberglauben, der mir oft den Tod nahegebracht hat.<sup>346</sup>

Ich bin auf dem in mäßigem Zustande befindlichen Geh-Steige (Trottoir) vor der Villa Ben Tiber im Haltertale hinter Hütteldorf am 25. Oktober des Jahres 1963 um die Mittagszeit zur Welt gekommen ...<sup>347</sup>

The lucidity and plasticity of the laconic, pregnant, yet at the same time almost weightless diction suffice to indicate that even in its fragmentary form Der Grenzwald clearly approximates to the author's ideal of the 'roman muet'. One is inclined to agree with Hans Flesch-Brunningen that the fact that Doderer did not live to complete this novel was one of the greatest tragedies in world literature.<sup>348</sup>

Yet even if Doderer's final novel had been completed, it is extremely doubtful whether this would have made any difference to the image with which the author had already become synonymous; for, as Georg Schmid shrewdly points out, experience tells us that what has become established as part of tradition is not supposed to change.<sup>349</sup> Schmid himself views Doderer's conservatism as the primary component of this unalterable image,<sup>350</sup> yet while this might be the case in the more politically orientated commentaries, it is as the amiable raconteur of large-scale novels set in Vienna on a large canvas with a multiplicity of characters, plots and sub-plots that Doderer is identified and remembered. One look at the picture of Doderer painted in histories of literature and more particularly in anthologies of world literature endorses this view. Rarely do we find a reference to Doderer without an explicit identification of his work with the city of Vienna, as two representative examples should suffice to indicate:

His works are a colourful dramatization of European history from about 1880 to 1960, the main protagonist being the city of Vienna and its society.<sup>351</sup>

In a highly artistic manner he depicts life and society in Vienna before and after 1914.<sup>352</sup>

Even when the author endeavoured to throw off the shackles of his Vienn-

ese home, the critics sought and found Vienna in everything he wrote. We have already seen examples of the singular reluctance of some critics to accept Ein Mord den jeder begeht and Die Merowinger as 'non-Viennese' novels. There is without doubt a quite misguided line in Doderer criticism that insists on a facile identification of the author's fictional world with Vienna, a harbinger of which could even be found in a review of Die Strudlhofstiege: '... welche Magie, im Wald und in Wien und überall in Österreich, auch wenn es Paris, Istanbul oder Budapest ist.'<sup>353</sup> It comes as no surprise, then, to find at least one critic openly admitting his disappointment over the geographical setting of the completed segment of Der Grenzwald:

Schmerzlich ..., daß ein großer Teil der mehr oder weniger ausgeführten Stücke nicht die Heimat des Verfassers zum Schauplatz hat ... Schon früher glich Doderer mitunter einem Antäus, dessen Riesenkraft bei fehlendem Kontakt mit dem eigenen Boden zu schwinden drohte. Hier, im unfertigen Roman, wird das merklicher als sonst, gerade gegenüber den wenigen Kapiteln aus Wien, die selbst dort, wo sie noch nicht ganz fertiggestellt sind, in höchster Meisterschaft glänzen.<sup>354</sup>

Yet again such a comment is only conceivable in the wake of Doderer's 'Viennese' novels. If this is true of Doderer's final work, it is even more obviously the case with his earliest works; for, whereas there is understandably no mention of the author's inborn 'Vienneseness' in the few extant reviews of the original editions of Die Bresche and Das Geheimnis des Reichs, the 1968 reprint of Doderer's Frühe Prosa provides his critics with yet another opportunity to discover Vienna in 'non-Viennese' works. Thus Hilde Spiel concludes: 'In der Bresche sah Doderer Landschaften und Stadtschaften zerdreht und verzerrt ... Wien und Brüssel flossen ihm zu einem unwirklichen Handlungsort zusammen.'<sup>355</sup> Of the .

hitherto unpublished Jutta Bamberger Spiel says: 'Auch sie ist in der seltsamen Zwischenstadt angesiedelt, die in Belgien liegen soll, aber mit Wien, mit der Donaulandschaft, weit größere Ähnlichkeit besitzt.'<sup>356</sup>

Hans Kricheldorff, on the other hand, whose comment on Der Grenzwald we have quoted above, finds it difficult to conceal the fact that for him one of the main criteria in the evaluation of a work of Doderer's is the relationship of that work to Vienna: 'Fehlen in der Bresche und im Geheimnis des Reichs die lokalen Bezüge - zu Wien nämlich - fast ganz, so scheinen sie in ... Jutta Bamberger, wiewohl kaum ausgesprochen, doch die Voraussetzung für die geradezu beklemmende Intensität zu sein, die dieses Bruchstück zum weitaus gewichtigsten Teil des angezeigten Nachlese-Bandes macht.'<sup>357</sup> Helmut Uhlig, too, finds evidence of Doderer's inimitable Viennese style in his early work: '... bemerkt werden muß, daß sein erster ... Roman Das Geheimnis des Reichs ... Doderer bereits als einen eigenwilligen Erzähler aus Wiener Tradition ausgewiesen hatte. Dabei war gerade dieser allererste Roman, wie man nun wohl sagen muß, nicht im k.u.k.-Gelände angesiedelt, sondern in Rußland.'<sup>358</sup>

As early as 1956 Karl August Horst had warned of the perils of a facile identification of an author with a particular trend, group or 'movement':

Alle diese schönen Metaphern, die längst in Zeitschriftentitel eingegangen sind, haben eines gemeinsam: daß der Brechungswinkel künstlicher Produktion vom Kritiker errechnet wird, und daß der solchermaßen gebrochene Schriftsteller fortan die Pflicht hat, in gerader Linie fortzufahren, andernfalls man ihm bescheinigen wird, daß er sich selber untreu geworden ist, daß er seine Farbe getauscht, sein Niveau unterschritten, kurzum daß er enttäuscht habe. Das war zu allen Zeiten so. Goethe hat sich von dem Erfolg seines Werther nicht erholt. Und von James Joyce sagt man - denn die wenigsten haben Finnegan's Wake wirklich gelesen -, daß der Ulysses das Ende des Romans schlechthin darstelle -

ungeachtet der Tatsache, daß Joyce seinen letzten Roman ursprünglich Work in Progress genannt hat.

Dieses ganze Gestrüpp aus Süffisance und Leseunfähigkeit – denn es ist notorisch, daß Kritiker häufig das Lesen verlernen – muß weggeräumt werden, sollen wir den Blick frei bekommen für das Werk des Autors [Heimito von Doderer] ...<sup>359</sup>

As amply illustrated above, what Doderer's critics failed to do was to free themselves from a host of prejudices as to how and what the author Heimito von Doderer ought to write. In the discussion which concluded the Doderer Symposium in Vienna in 1976, Wolfgang Kraus is reported to have warned that such a gathering might be regarded as corresponding to what the church calls 'canonization', by which he meant 'eine Art Seligsprechung Doderers'.<sup>360</sup> Quite apart from the fact that a few years later one reviewer actually did speak of the Austrian 'Heiligtum' Doderer,<sup>361</sup> it is by now obvious that in reality Doderer, or more precisely his 'Viennese' novels had long since been 'canonized' during the author's lifetime. Ludwig Pesch is representative of most of Doderer's critics when, blithely ignoring such works as Die Bresche, Das Geheimnis des Reichs, Das letzte Abenteuer, Ein Mord den jeder begeht and Die Merowinger, he declares: 'Doderers Werk kreiste immer um Wien und den Wiener.'<sup>362</sup> The logical and ludicrous culmination of the unqualified identification of Doderer with the 'Viennese' novels is the following comment by Kurt Kahl on the posthumously published diaries Commentarii 1951 bis 1956: 'Wenn man diese Passagen voller Wien-Empfindungen für sich nimmt (und vieles andere nur für Literaturkenner Interessante überblättert), wenn man die Commentarii als Wien-Buch annimmt, dann muß man gar keinen Roman Heimito von Doderers kennen, um ihn zu lieben.'<sup>363</sup>

In the light of such a fixation on the part of Doderer's critics with the topographical centre of most of his works, a number of important



questions arise. To what extent does Doderer's own intensive preoccupation with Vienna represent a limitation of his artistic capabilities? How far is the author himself responsible for the creation of the image with which he is so readily identified? Does the term 'Viennese novelist' do full justice to Doderer's artistic achievement? Finally, and most importantly, what is it in Doderer's writings that induces his critics to search for Vienna even in works which have manifestly nothing to do with the city? In order to answer these questions we must again turn to the critical reaction which the monumental novels of the 1950s provoked.

When Doderer shot to literary stardom with Die Strudlhofstiege in 1951, an intriguing and remarkable convergence of opinion was soon to emerge among the critics. As Paul Kruntorad rightly remarks, not only Austrian critics, from whom such epithets might have been expected, but German and Swiss critics, even Italians and Americans revealed an uncanny predilection for the adjective 'Viennese' in their introduction to Doderer's work.<sup>364</sup> When the novelist then produced his mammoth Die Dämonen in 1956, he had already become firmly established in the critical consciousness as the chronicler of Vienna. Yet despite the apparent unanimity of Doderer's critics vis-à-vis his inimitably Viennese style, their reactions to Doderer's depiction of his native city again encapsulate the polarization of opinion that pervades the reception of all his works. On the one hand, the author's portrayal of the Austrian metropolis is hailed as a major contribution to twentieth century world literature:

Nirgendwo findet sich wohl in der Literatur ein so herrliches  
Bild der Stadt ...<sup>365</sup>

... hier endlich ist Wien als Großstadt für die Weltliteratur  
entdeckt worden ...<sup>366</sup>

... no other German-speaking city has ever been evoked by a  
novelist with quite the same topographical love and care - in

all seasons and during different times of day and night - as  
Vienna by Heimito von Doderer.<sup>367</sup>

Comparisons with such literary giants as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Balzac,  
Dickens and Joyce abound:

[Doderer stellt] sein Wien aus den beiden ersten Jahrzehnten  
unseres Jahrhunderts neben das Paris Balzacs, das London  
Dickens' und das Petersburg Dostojewskis ...<sup>368</sup>

Österreich, besonders Wien, war als Schauplatz größer und be-  
deutender Romane bisher minder privilegiert als Paris, London,  
Petersburg. Nun haben wir mit landesüblicher Verspätung unser  
Gegenstück zu Dickens, Balzac, Tolstoi ...<sup>369</sup>

Neben das Paris Balzacs, das London Dickens', das Petersburg  
Dostojewskis tritt nun das Wien Heimito von Doderers. Daß die  
Stadt in ... Die Dämonen ... wie in keinem anderen Werk einge-  
fangen erscheint, bis über ihren Rand hinaus, wo sie in die  
Landschaft übergeht, bis in ihre unterirdischen Kanäle hinab,  
in ihren Farbenspielen und Lichtbrechungen zu jeder Jahres- und  
Tageszeit, aber auch mit ihren Menschen aller Schichten und  
Klassen, ist noch das geringste ...<sup>370</sup>

... a unique panorama of Balzacian dimensions of all the strata  
of Viennese society.<sup>371</sup>

Kein heute lebender deutschsprachiger Schriftsteller hat in auch  
nur vergleichbarem Maß 'eine Welt' erstehen lassen, wie Doderer.  
Nicht daß er in den einzelnen Romanen 'Welt' gibt, diese Romane  
hängen außerdem, zumindest teilweise, durch gemeinsame Figuren  
zusammen, sie schaffen im Balzac'schen Sinn eine 'Comédie  
humaine'. Wie Balzac, hatte Doderer freilich eine Stadt ge-  
wählt, die 'Welt' in sich barg, nämlich Wien.<sup>372</sup>

So accurate are Doderer's portraits of Viennese society that some critics  
even maintain that the author's world is more realistic than reality it-  
self:

Er [Doderer] ist in ihr [Wien] geboren, in ihr zuhause, ist ein Teil von ihr, wird von ihrem Leben getragen und schafft ihr weiteres Leben. Denn wie unser Bild vom einstigen Paris viel eher dem Kopf Balzacs entsprungen ist, als es der damaligen Wirklichkeit folgt, so hat auch Doderer in der Strudlhofstiege, den Dämonen und den anderen Werken eine Vision von Wien geschaffen, die weitaus deutlicher und typischer ist als die Realität. Sowohl in der Welt von 'Melzer und die Tiefe der Jahre' als auch in der 'Chronik des Sektionsrats Geyrenhoff' ... zeigt er eine 'zweite Wirklichkeit', von der man annehmen kann, daß sie das Wien-Bild späterer Generationen wesentlich bestimmen wird.<sup>373</sup>

Kein Motiv ist zu abgedroschen, kein Straßenbild von Wien zu populär und banal, daß ihm nicht dieser Autor neues Leben einhauchte. Doderer ist Wien.

...

Wer, wie ich, nach einer intensiven Lektüre seiner Bücher, sich in die Kaffeehäuser und auf die Straße Wiens begibt, glaubt, sich nicht so sehr in der Realität selbst zu bewegen, sondern einen Abklatsch der künstlerisch wahrsten Realität Doderers nachzuerleben. Wenn wir sagten: Doderer ist Wien, so könnte man ebenso gut sagen: Wien ist Doderer. So wie Balzac sein Paris, Dickens sein London aufgebaut hat, so wie sich James Joyce rühmte, man könnte, werde es einmal völlig zerstört, nach seinem Ulysses die Stadt Dublin neu erbauen, so hat Doderer das alte und neue Wien tatsächlich aufgebaut - äre perenius.<sup>374</sup>

... So getreu, daß wir beim nächsten Besuch in Wien am liebsten den Amtsrat Melzer aufsuchen würden, um zu sehen, was vom Major Melzer etwa doch noch in ihm steckt ...<sup>375</sup>

There can be little doubt that the majority of Doderer's readers are enthralled by an almost mystical fascination which emanates from the author's depictions of his home town, a fascination which provokes an irrational emotional response which, as even as harsh a critic of Doderer as Schröder has to concede,<sup>376</sup> is difficult to overcome. Ivar Ivask is surely not

alone in his sentiments when he declares:

Indem man sich aufmerksam in diese Romane [Die Strudlhofstiege, Die Dämonen, Die Wasserfälle von Slunj] vertieft, wird man fast unmerklich zum Wahl-Wiener (so genau glaubt man bald die Topographie der Stadt zu kennen) und langsam nimmt man sogar den Wiener Lebensstil an - vom Gang ins Café bis zum orientalischen Tschibuk-Rauchen, von der Theater- und Musikfreudigkeit bis zur Verehrung des esoterischen Gütersloh.<sup>377</sup>

Doderer's fictional Vienna becomes for many a living place, the tangible reality of which can be readily verified if one has the inclination - or a street map of the city:

Die Topographie des (für den Fremdenverkehr uninteressanten, meist erst seit den fünfziger Jahren des vorigen Säkulums allmählich entstandenen, vor Doderer literarisch anonym gewesenenen) Stadtteils 'Unter den Weißgerbern' ist so genau, daß ein aufmerksamer Leser sie kartographisch verwerten könnte.<sup>378</sup>

[Doderer] can evoke the mood of a character walking through the streets of Vienna, conjure up memories in the mind of both character and reader and still attend precisely to the city's geography. The reader of Doderer may be led to examine a map of Vienna, but the reader of Proust is not apt to seek out a map of Paris.<sup>379</sup>

The gentle reader may care to have a street-plan of Vienna at his elbow as he proceeds.<sup>380</sup>

Il n'est pas inutile de bien connaître son plan de Vienne pour s'orienter dans Les Démons de M. Heimito von Doderer.<sup>381</sup>

... the reader is well advised to have a street map of Vienna at his elbow, for the movements of the figures across the boundaries of the city represent many important ups and downs in their social and human careers.<sup>382</sup>

Bis ins Letzte verständlich nur für den, der Wien kennen und

lieben gelernt und der noch ein Organ hat für Pracht, Pathos  
und barocke Fülle.<sup>383</sup>

Yet it is precisely here that the major paradox in Doderer's writings lies. Whereas many critics and readers delight in cross-checking map references and in the time-honoured passion for comparing the original localities with the author's fictional descriptions, to such an extent that the Strudlhofstiege has developed into a veritable 'Wallfahrtsort' for Doderer devotees from all over the world, almost as many critics find the author's attention to detail nothing more than an irritating and pedantic preoccupation with an outmoded, photographic conception of realism. The mere fact that an acquaintance with, if not an elective affinity with Vienna appears to be a prerequisite for a full understanding of Doderer's works which are set in the city, suffices to provoke the wrath of many a frustrated critic:

... for a full comprehension it entails reading with a map of the city at one's elbow.<sup>384</sup>

He [the reader] may occasionally get lost in the engulfing labyrinth of 143 characters and their seemingly strange meanderings (and wish for a map of Vienna!) ...<sup>385</sup>

Schon jetzt findet sich darin [in Doderers Werk] so manches, was sich dem Leser, der kein Wiener, ja kein Döblinger oder Heiligenstaedter ist, wohl nicht enträtselt ...<sup>386</sup>

More to the point, Doderer's intense preoccupation with Vienna occasionally leads to suggestions that his work is parochial:

Musil hat Kakanien, dem Reich, in dem einst die Sonne nicht unterging und in dem die Bevölkerung ein Dutzend Sprachen sprach und schrieb, ein Monument geschaffen, Doderer dem Wiener Bürger

und dem Wienerwald.<sup>387</sup>

Durch diese genaue Beortung gewinnt der Dichter etwas warm  
Anheimelndes und so stellt sie sich als bewußt österreichische  
Heimatdichtung und als eine ins Österreichische gewendete  
Forsythe Saga dar.<sup>388</sup>

There can be little doubt that Friedrich Torberg is right when he suggests that Doderer himself would have had no objection to being described as the most Austrian of all Austrian writers,<sup>389</sup> yet it is this very conscious 'Austrianness', so much a part of the author's inimitable style, that is at the root of the problem. So profoundly Austrian is Doderer's work that it appears to be intended a priori for a reading public confined to insiders and would-be insiders. It is surely no coincidence that non-German-speaking reviewers and critics in particular should feel the need to warn the prospective Doderer reader of the author's passionate love for the minutiae of Viennese life. And it is to a non-German-speaking part of the world that we must turn now to illuminate fully our picture of the complex relationship between Doderer and his native city. For, despite the fact that Doderer in his last few years of life finally achieved his aim of belying the proverb 'nemo propheta in patria' by gaining recognition, indeed distinction in his native Austria, so much so that his death was marked by stately obsequies the likes of which had never been accorded to an Austrian writer before,<sup>390</sup> if the prophet is to counter the charge of parochialism, his work must prove to be of universal rather than merely local significance. And what better testing-ground for the universality of Doderer's work than America, a land whose culture and history could scarcely be farther removed from Doderer's Vienna, a land where both critic and reader are equipped with a completely different cultural, political and, above all, critical apparatus from the Central European.

## VII Doderer in America

Before examining in detail the reception accorded to Doderer's works in the United States, it is necessary to cast a brief glance at what has been translated and at the quality of the translations themselves. For it is a well-known fact that, as fewer and fewer Americans are able to read German, the role of the translator and translations becomes proportionately more significant in transmitting German culture.

It was not until 1961 that Doderer was introduced to an American reading public with the translation of what many regard as his finest work, Die Dämonen.<sup>391</sup> This was followed by translations of Ein Mord den jeder begeht and Die Wasserfälle von Slunj in 1964 and 1966 respectively.<sup>392</sup> In addition, a selection of Doderer's short stories and theoretical writings appeared scattered over a variety of literary and academic periodicals with a limited readership and thus of relatively minor interest here.

The reasons for Doderer's somewhat belated arrival on the American literary scene are not too difficult to find. The sheer bulk of his works presents the translator with an unenviable task, and introducing a hitherto virtually unknown novelist with a work of almost half a million words was a financial risk which only an exceptionally brave publisher would be willing to run. Yet Doderer found such a publisher in the New York based Alfred A. Knopf. On the eve of the publication of The Demons, Doderer's American publishers also revealed a remarkable frankness in their assessment of the chances of the novel's becoming a best seller in the New World: 'On September 18 we will publish a book for which I confidently predict a brilliant succès d'estime. I am not certain as to what its sale will be, for The Demons ... is a huge novel. ... It may net us

a bigger loss than any other work of fiction we have published ...',<sup>393</sup>  
Such commercial considerations notwithstanding, Doderer's publishers chose as it were to rise above abject capitalism, and ventured to introduce the author to America. The publication of The Demons was, nevertheless, attended by a predictably lavish public relations exercise. Taking care to pay appropriate attention to a description of Doderer in the TLS four years earlier as 'the most formidable German-speaking novelist now living',<sup>394</sup> the publishers proudly proclaimed:

Each generation boasts only a handful of artists for whom one dares to make extravagant claims. To that list of twentieth century giants - Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Sigrid Undset - we may now add the name of Helmito von Doderer ... The richness of incident and the variety of human character in this brilliantly translated work of narrative art offer that rarity in contemporary writing - sustained pleasurable reading.<sup>395</sup>

The publishers' suggestion as to the quality of the translation duly found its reflection in the reviews, where descriptions range from 'ably',<sup>396</sup> and 'meticulously' translated<sup>397</sup> to 'admirable',<sup>398</sup> 'excellent',<sup>399</sup> indeed 'an heroic feat',<sup>400</sup> and this despite the fact that Doderer's language presents the translator with quite exceptional difficulties. Deeply rooted in the Austrian tradition, reaching from the almost incomprehensible jargon of 'Kakanian' officialese via the upper-middle-class colloquial idiom of the majority of his protagonists, to the depths of the Viennese vernacular, and replete with Latinisms, neologisms, archaic forms, puns, conceits and runaway metaphors ('Eine durchgegangene Metapher rennt halt, wohin sie will'),<sup>401</sup> Doderer's language is, as Hatfield suggests, something akin to a New High Austrian which appears at first sight to be all but untranslatable.<sup>402</sup> So consciously and representatively



Austrian is Doderer's diction that Duden sees fit to cite the author on no less than 211 occasions in the standard Wie sagt man in Österreich?.<sup>403</sup> Allied to these idiosyncracies is a characteristically eccentric attitude towards normative orthography:

Es gibt keine Orthographie.

... Eine genaue sprachliche Notation ist ... mit einer normativen Orthographie vollständig unverträglich.<sup>404</sup>

Dudens deutsche Rechtschreibung ist das dümmste deutsche Buch; und es gibt ihrer viel dumme. Ich würde nie einen Duden in meiner Bibliothek dulden.<sup>405</sup>

How can the translator be expected to convey Doderer's intractable adherence to spellings with the letter 'c' wherever possible, a whim which so outraged the linguistic purists among his German-speaking critics? Once again, as with so many elements of Doderer's unique style, we find a crucial component of his writings - and what could be more crucial to a novelist than his language? - presenting the critic who is unable to identify fully with the eccentricities, with an obstacle to a relatively objective appraisal of the author's achievement. The reactions are by now all too familiar: fascinated approval or outright rejection, but never a middle course:

... mit einer Sprach-, Ton- und Modulierungsmeisterschaft, für die es weder in der neueren deutschen noch in der Weltliteratur ein Gegenbeispiel gibt ...<sup>406</sup>

Überhaupt die Sprache Doderers! Daß er - Schüler Güterslohs - ein Manierist ist, weiß man. Dieser Tatsache sind Wortbildungen wie 'Planei' für eine Ebene, die 'Reise ins Exotische' (nach Wien und auf den Balkan), die 'zeitmodische Frisur', 'gemachsam', 'Frühsumpf der Jugend', '... das Gekuppel der Bäume', '... kuppelten hohe, dicke Cumulus-Wolken ...', 'sotane Exsequien',

um nur einige wenige Beispiele zu nennen, zuzuschreiben. Sie sind keineswegs schön und auch nicht überzeugend. Daß er Credit, Documente, Facturen, Centimeter, Cigarren und Cigaretten schreibt, mag noch hingehen – das könnte Zeit-'Kolorit' oder Eigenbrötlerei sein, warum aber dann wieder 'Komposition'? Ein Druckfehler? Daß aber Dinge passieren, die geradezu peinliches Versehen sind, so wenn der Autor etwa sagt: 'Clayton lag am monströs geschwungenen mächtigen Diwan' (15), 'Die Linie der Mühlen, welche den Katarakt bekrönten, wurde von Harriet und Clayton jetzt von rückwärts gesehen' (17), daß 'diskret' und 'dezent' auf S. 202 verwechselt wird, Langusten zwischen Klippen gefangen werden und es heißt: 'Donald war durch einen obschwebenden Lüster klar beleuchtet' (343), 'Jetzt sprengte Zdenko sein Pferd in den Galopp ein ...' (385), 'Vielleicht aus der Schweiz, wo sie erzogen war ...' (253), 'er warf seine Beine wie Würstel' (136), 'als Donald schon im zweiten Jahr auf einer public school war' (140), 'fiel ihm ein, daß er ein erhebliches Geld auf der Sparkasse hatte ...' (46), dann fragt man sich, ob Doderer nicht selbst der 'lingua conciergicus' erlegen ist, und nimmt Blüten wie etwa: 'Am Ufer gab es eine Fülle von brennenden Interessen ...' (124), '... Sie war durch ihre Heirat in eine Lage gekommen, in welcher sie bald vor Erstaunen einfach steckenblieb ...' (78) oder: 'Donald ergraute schon gegen sein dreißigstes Jahr an den Schläfen, während sein Vater noch hoch in den Fünfzig ein unverfärbtes und ungefärbtes Haar am Haupte trug' als unfreiwillig humoristischen Bereicherung einer Sprache an, die zwischen falschem Deutsch, Beamtendeutsch, falschen Bildern, Klischees, Schlamperei, 'Pseudosprache' und Prätentation pendelt. Stil ist das keiner. Das Bedrückende ist, daß sich die Beispiele beliebig vermehren ließen, daß sich hier ein Jargon, der vorgibt, Sprache zu sein, mit einer literarischen Konzeption verbindet, die vorgibt, Wirklichkeit zu sein. Was in diesem Roman geschieht, läßt sich mit dem Wort einer 'Nebenfigur' ziemlich genau bestimmen, wenn Tibor Gergelffi sagt: 'Stimmt es irgendwo nicht, dann stimmt es eben nirgends ...' (341). Hier stimmt es nicht nur 'irgendwo' nicht, es stimmt alles nicht ...<sup>407</sup>

Yet, love it or hate it, one cannot deny that Doderer's language is the very essence of his inimitable style. In the circumstances, then, an adequate rendering of Doderer's prose is a challenging proposition, even for translators of repute.. Moreover, a close examination of any translation of the proportions of The Demons will inevitably unveil a variety of omissions, mistranslations and inaccuracies, no matter how conscientious the translator has been. It must be admitted that, on the whole, Richard and Clara Winston have made a thoroughly professional job of the daunting task of translating Doderer's mammoth novel; and their rendering of the spurious medieval manuscript in the chapter 'Down There' is indeed a veritable tour de force. Yet the translation does have a number of major flaws. The anonymous reviewer in the TLS complains that the Winstons might have chosen a 'more deliberately mid-Atlantic idiom ... for a translation obviously aimed at the whole English-speaking world'.<sup>408</sup> It is not merely that such obtrusive Americanisms as 'gasoline',<sup>409</sup> 'curb' (509) for 'kerb', 'kibitzing' (135), 'happenstance' (223), 'pocket-book' (274), 'necktie' (284), 'upperclassmen' (679), 'checkerboarded' (288), 'outage' (1205), 'gearshift' (367), 'mean son-of-a-bitch' (524), 'vise' (915) for 'vice', 'faucet' (560), 'mailbox' (627), 'specialty' (820), 'spritzer' (877), 'suspenders' (915), 'screwy' (1032), 'fancy duds' (1115), 'garbage can' (1267), 'railroad' (171), 'sidewalk' (38ff.), not to mention the almost ubiquitous 'still and all' (passim) sound somewhat less than euphonious to the non-American reader. Many an English-speaker would shudder at the mere thought of a car purring with perfect evenness 'over the pavement' (680), and would be more inclined to think of a misspelling of the French currency than of sausages, were he to read that the 'Herr Baron likes to have a couple of franks at that hour' (1309). Moreover, one might be forgiven for assuming that someone who 'preferred walking to riding' (885) had an antipathy towards horses rather than

public transport. Nor is it merely the occasional split infinitives (e.g. 'to thoroughly examine' (31), 'to violently throw' (316), 'to properly conceal' (1152) ) or such affected renderings as 'a wee bit' (497) and a 'wee roof' (224), or even the almost churlish 'an old dodderer' (618), that vitiate the translation, for, had Doderer written in English, he would no doubt have taken great pleasure in splitting every infinitive he could lay his hands on, and one can equally easily imagine him indulging in self-mockery and affectation. It is not even in the apparently deliberate abridgement of the second volume of the novel, which is considerably shorter than Doderer's original, that the main weakness lies. Much more important is the fact that the world evoked by such renderings as 'drug-store' (422), 'roadster' (172 ff.), 'night spots' (615), 'movies' (164 ff.), 'downtown' (236 ff.), 'grade school' (895), 'saloon' (164), 'punks' (605 ff.), 'shacks' (57), 'hooch' (511), 'trolley-train' (310), 'real estate boom' (189), 'four-in-hand' (414), 'candy' (309 ff.), 'men's room' (139), and particularly by 'Vaudeville acrobats' (605) for 'Artisten',<sup>410</sup> is quite simply too far removed, not only geographically, but above all spiritually, from Doderer's Vienna. Schlaggenberg's references to 'this Starkbreiter broad' (468) and 'this Steuermann broad' (468) might be found only just acceptable on the grounds of the possible pun, but one must seriously question the compatibility of the following collocation, ironic though it may be:

Ha, wretch, art caught - at last I find you here,  
 Who secretly delighted in a star,  
 While giving me, with Selma, a bum steer! (1121)

One can also scarcely imagine Doderer having written that Anny Gräven 'felt quite chipper' (1199). Finally, it is quite inconceivable that

Frau Kapsreiter should write in her 'nocturnal' that she felt 'so blue' (1193) or would talk of going 'to the john' (955 f.).

A further question mark hovers over the translators' rendering of the various levels of Viennese dialect. The TLS critic suggests that it would perhaps have been better to ignore the dialect completely.<sup>411</sup> Yet this would have undoubtedly have robbed Doderer's novel of an essential ingredient. Given the translators' choice to render the passages of Viennese vernacular in colloquial American, two important questions must be asked. Is this done consistently, and is the idiom chosen an appropriate equivalent to the original? A brief look at the translation is enough to reveal quite undeniably that the Winstons do not succeed in maintaining the American tone throughout the novel. Amidst the Americanisms, one suddenly encounters such characteristic Britishisms as 'excellent chap' (558), 'I say' (863), 'righto' (751), 'fagged out' (924) and 'how jolly' (320). The narrator Geyrenhoff, whose language is for the most part coloured by a mildly American bias, suffers occasional lapses into a more specifically British tone: 'Salutations, eh what!' (360), 'diggings' (239). Grete Siebenschein, whose 'Warte, richt' dir die Haare' (Dämonen, p.189) is rendered as 'Wait, your hair's all mussed' (191), soon contrives to sound much more like a middle-class Englishwoman: '... ugh! That old rotter' (201), 'Stinker!' (203). Similarly, the occasional unwarranted interpolation of an altogether alien idiom in the dialect spoken by the members of the lowest social stratum underscores the translators' inability to convey accurately and consistently the subtle nuances of Doderer's prose: 'When for once ya get a gent what's a real gent ...' (1033), 'the ones as used to be your regulars' (1313). Such brief transatlantic excursions reveal once more the difficulties involved in rendering Doderer's highly idiosyncratic diction in readable English.

On the other hand, the use of token German and Austrian words, ranging

from 'Grüss Gott' (82), 'Servus' (507), 'gnädige Frau' (105 ff.), 'Heuriger' (688) and 'Prosit' (748) to 'Kipfel' (235), 'Konditorei' (358 ff.), 'Ober' (368), 'Jause' (160 f.) and 'Guglhupf' (160), intended, no doubt, to intensify the Viennese atmosphere of the novel, is strangely out of place in the midst of the manifold Americanisms. Similarly, the American colloquialisms themselves seem strangely inappropriate as renderings of the Viennese. The cultural gap between the two languages is simply too wide to bridge. Would one really expect Alois Gach, whose 'antiquated phraseology' (580) strikes Niki Zdarsa and Kakabsa, to describe the cavalry as 'pretty flashy' (591)? The following translation of a Meisgeier tirade reveals perhaps most vividly that the American idiom is quite simply incompatible with the Viennese parlance:

'Those rats!' he screamed. 'You horse's ass, Didi, you dumb slut. Those rats, those Reds, those brown-noses! We'd be sewed up good and proper if we had them. All they want is to fix things so everybody shares alike - like a bunch of sheep. And where would that leave me! Where would it leave you? Those mother -----. Aren't you ashamed down to your ----- talking such -----. The Sozis are the worst enemies we have, the worst anyone has who isn't a lousy stool pigeon and ass licker. In my book the Reds come right after the cops!' (953)

As so often in the translation, the very essence of the original, with its characteristically playful asides such as '(wir erinnern daran: er war dem Dialekt nicht ganz verhaftet)' (Dämonen, p. 954), '"... bei denen wären wir ausg'schmiert, wie man in Bayern sagt" (dort war er also auch schon gewesen?!)' (ibid.), '"nach der Höh' (Polizei)!"' (ibid.), is necessarily lost.

If the Winstons translation of Die Dämonen had, in spite of the weaknesses outlined above, met with universal critical approval, the same

could certainly not be said of their rendering of Ein Mord den jeder be-  
geht. On the contrary, the latter translation provoked such diametric-  
ally opposed evaluations as 'admirable',<sup>412</sup> and 'deplorable',<sup>413</sup> culminating  
in the following illogical yet at the same time curiously pertinent  
statement by Sarah Gainham: 'The original, which I have not read, must  
have been extremely good, but the translation is not adequate to Doderer's  
mind. Technically competent, it fails to express the depth and subtlety  
which are found in his other work. ... the German has been attacked from  
the outside, almost transliterated, instead of being "übertragen" ... into  
the new language.'<sup>414</sup> One certainly has the impression that the trans-  
lators have taken far less care over the relatively short novel, for  
omissions and distortions abound. Once again the world of 'tank trucks',<sup>415</sup>  
'high-school meets' (307), 'pitchers' (282) and 'higher-class chippies'  
(313/314), of the 'bookbag' (23) and 'mailman' (160 ff.), the world where  
schoolchildren 'receive passing grades' (49) and 'graduate' (243), whilst  
students 'flunk out' (106) or have an interest in 'this dame or that' (69),  
where one has a 'shot of rye' (347) and 'picks up the tab' (314) - this  
world is quite evidently incompatible with the Teutonic world of Conrad  
Castiletz. Moreover, a rendering such as 'There are many things I cannot  
exactly pin down' (318) for 'Ich kann mich eigentlich, wenn ich's gerade  
will, an vieles nicht erinnern ... an sehr vieles nicht',<sup>416</sup> is a classic  
example of lack of precision or quite simply lack of care on the part of  
the translator undermining a motif which plays a crucial role in the  
original - in this case the vital leitmotif 'memory' - and thus weakening  
the content of the novel. Similarly, the sustained use of 'young fellow'  
for the 'Benjamin' motif clearly does not arouse such vivid connotations  
as the more striking German idiom, although here the problem obviously  
lies in the fact that there is simply no English equivalent to 'Benjamin'.  
On the other hand, to express 'Erfreulich jedenfalls, daß wir uns bei

diesem Anlasse so zufällig getroffen haben' (Mord, p. 339) as 'At least it brought you to Berlin' (343) clearly reveals how unsusceptible the translators were to the essential, indeed dominant role of the chance/coincidence/fate complex in the novel. As Robert von Berg rightly says in another context, 'Der Teufel steckt im Detail. Jedes Wort hat seinen Stellenwert.'<sup>417</sup> In a novel so tautly constructed as Ein Mord den jeder begeht, even an apparently minor alteration can have significant repercussions. Thus the German '... aus einem Studenten ist etwa ein Motorführer bei der "Untergrund" geworden, wie man in Berlin sagt' (Mord, p. 105) appears in the English version as 'A student has become an engine driver on the "underground", as they say in London ...' (106). Quite apart from the fact that the Londoners' pet name for the 'underground' is the 'tube', the subtle prefigurative effect of the reference to Berlin in the novel - Botulitzky is later encountered as a train driver in the Berlin underground - is lost completely. On the other hand, the translators' choice to interpret the 'deshalb' in the phrase 'und er, Castiletz, mußte heute deshalb vor einer Mauer ohne Tor umherirren' (Mord, p. 234) as 'because Herr Inkrat was something of a dud as a detective' (236), is an (unsuccessful) attempt to improve the original which clearly oversteps the bounds of translators' freedom. Finally, to translate 'Uzen Sie Ihre Ungroßtante' (Mord, p. 207) as 'Kiss your arse, Hohenlocher' (209) is a transgression not only against the spirit of the original but against common good taste.

The final translation of a full-length Doderer novel was the rendering of Die Wasserfälle von Slunj by Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser, which was edited and published by Helen Wolff, who openly admitted that Doderer was 'one of the major European writers most difficult to "put across" the cultural wall that divides the two continents',<sup>418</sup> because of his overwhelmingly Austrian style, which, she insisted, could be 'read in the



right way only by "south Germans".<sup>419</sup> Nevertheless, this translation in many respects merits such epithets as 'superb',<sup>420</sup> 'excellent',<sup>421</sup> or 'beautiful',<sup>422</sup> which the critics accord to it. Moreover, the less frequent and less obtrusive Americanisms do not clash quite so violently with the tone of Doderer's fictional world, although a collocation such as 'on which Monica's diapers had been changed of yore',<sup>423</sup> or the recurring phrase 'the Harbach dafties' (235ff.) might leave the reader a little bemused. However, here, too, the main problem lies in the rendering of the not infrequent passages of Viennese dialect in readable English. Given the overall American bias in the tone of the translation ('sidewalks' (83ff.), 'windshield' (229), 'rubbernecks' (43), etc.), one might be forgiven for anticipating an equally American bias in the dialect passages. Yet, strangely enough, this is not the case. Instead, the translators vacillate between ignoring the dialect completely (to the loss, naturally, of much of the flavour of Doderer's text), and rendering it in a strangely out of place, mildly cockney idiom:

'I geh net', ...

'Mir gengan', ...

'I mag net', ...

'Sei g'scheit', ...

'Gehma baden', ...<sup>424</sup>

'Ich bin die Finy, gnä' Frau.'

'Und ich die Feverl. Und wir müssen jetzt gehen. Wir haben an Weg.' (Wasserfälle, p.66)

'De Madln kennens ja oben net allanich bleiben!' (Wasserfälle, p.86)

'Hast a Menscherl, daß d'alleweil

'Not me', ...

'We'll go', ...

'I don't feel like it', ...

'Don't be a fool', ...

'Come on, let's go swimming', ...

'I'm called Finy, madam.'

'And I'm Feverl. And now we ought to be off. We've got an errand.' (62)

'Those trollops can't be left alone up there!' (81)

'What's all this scrubbing in aid

an dir umanand' schleckst?!'  
(Wasserfälle, p.58)

of, anyway? Picked yourself up a  
floozy, eh?' (54)

In addition to the inconsistent rendering of dialect, the translation has one further major flaw. Doderer's own predilection for archaisms notwithstanding, there is simply no justification for the following translations:

'Beliebte Gäste wurden geduzt.'  
(Wasserfälle, p.290)

'Favored customers, incidentally,  
were addressed by the familiar  
"thou".' (278)

'Hätten die jungen Herren noch ein  
kleines Stück gehen oder fahren  
mögen, ...' (Wasserfälle, p.327)

'If those young gentlemen had be-  
stirred themselves and walked, or  
had themselves transported, only a  
short distance farther, ...' (313)

'Damit ging er auf die Brücke.'  
(Wasserfälle, p.122)

'The captain thereupon betook him-  
self to the bridge.' (116)

'... bewegte sich ... in der Rich-  
tung des geringsten Widerstandes.'  
(Wasserfälle, p.144)

'... bestirred himself in the direc-  
tion of least resistance.' (138)

'Eine durchgegangene Metapher rennt  
halt, wohin sie will.' (Wasserfälle,  
p.111)

'... an escaped metaphor will run  
where it listeth.' (105)

And although 'Torkel' is a slightly archaic form of the more common 'Weinkelter', the use of the Shakespearean 'shame-laden toss-pot' (53) for 'mit Schmach bedeckter Torkel' (Wasserfälle, p.57) does seem a trifle overdone. Allied to the frequent and often quite inappropriate archaisms are the by now familiar Briticisms such as 'a little chap' (126), 'florins' (66), 'strumpets' (62), 'pavement' (178), or 'Upon my soul, she's bringing the trollops in with her!' (61). It is as if the translators find it totally impossible to sustain the tone of the New World, so powerful is the almost magnetic attraction of Doderer's world, steeped as it is in centuries of

European history. It is an idle question whether it might not have been better to adopt a more specifically British tone for the English translations of Doderer's novels, for the translators consistently chose to ignore this line of approach. The frequent Briticisms and archaisms are no more than concessions to a world which the translators perhaps subconsciously acknowledged to be altogether more compatible with Doderer's.

In the light of the fact that of the three translations of Doderer novels hitherto published in English, none has succeeded in being even remotely commensurate with, and on many occasions even compatible with the original, one must consider whether Doderer's own works do not belie his contention that the novel is translatable.<sup>425</sup> Although his translators usually manage to find approximate equivalents on the surface level, too much of Doderer's inimitable style is lost on the way. Even if his works had been translated into a more British idiom, there is little doubt that the unique tone of Doderer's prose would still not have been captured. In the final analysis, one must concede that Doderer suffers the same fate as such illustrious compatriots of his as Raimund and Nestroy: his works cannot be translated into a foreign language - not even German - without losing much of their substance, indeed essence. So deeply and consciously Austrian are they that they must be read in the original to be appreciated fully - which is, of course, a significant, though self-imposed limitation.

Yet, despite the obvious difficulties involved in 'putting Doderer across' to non-Austrophiles, Hilde Spiel had proclaimed as early as 1957, on the occasion of a visit to London and Oxford by Doderer:

Seit dem Erscheinen der Strudlhofstiege und ihres Nachfolgers, der Dämonen, besitzt Österreich wieder einmal einen Autor von europäischer Geltung, den es getrost als kulturellen Ambassadeur ins Ausland entsenden kann. Jenes immer wieder unbegreifliche Wunder, daß eine ungemein eigenwillige, abseitige, zartge-

spinnene und eigentlich kaum noch mitteilbare Lebensvision nicht allein von einem kleinen Häuflein Gleichgesinnter, sondern von einem breiten Publikum verständnisvoll aufgenommen werden kann, hat sich hier bereits zu Lebzeiten des Dichters vollzogen.<sup>426</sup>

As in so much of Doderer criticism, the striking dichotomy between the inflated claims of this premature prediction and the reality of the reception Doderer encountered in the English-speaking world was soon to become all too evident.

Nevertheless, given Doderer's popularity in Germany and Austria in the 1950s and early 1960s, it is not surprising that the publication of The Demons in America provoked a flurry of articles in the German and Austrian press reflecting on the critical response to Doderer across the Atlantic. Robert von Berg writes: 'Die kritische Aufnahme, welche die von Richard und Clara Winston geschickt angefertigte englische Übersetzung von Heimito von Doderers Die Dämonen in Amerika gefunden hat, verrät eigentlich mehr über die Rezensenten als über den literarischen Rang des schwierigen Buches.'<sup>427</sup> This is, of course, true not only of Doderer's American reviewers, nor is its validity restricted even to critics of Doderer. It is a simple fact of literary life that most reviews tell the prospective reader more about the reviewer than about the work under review. The irony is that Berg's remark is an even more pertinent description of those who choose to provide the German-speaking reader with a reflection of the reception of Doderer in America, for, depending on the standpoint of the critic, Doderer's American debut is depicted as either a remarkable success or a disappointing failure. Whereas the anonymous critic in the Viennese Arbeiterzeitung insists that the echo which Doderer's novel found in the American press was exceptionally positive, with comparisons to no less a masterpiece than Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre<sup>428</sup> and Dolores Maria Bauer asserts

that the novel was a 'literary sensation',<sup>429</sup> others emphasize that The Demons was anything but an unqualified success. Thus, in an article entitled 'Doderer im Kreuzfeuer der Kritik. Die englische Übersetzung der Dämonen ruft mehr Ablehnung als Begeisterung hervor',<sup>430</sup> the critic signing himself W.M. maintains: 'Sie [die Rezensenten] zeigen zum Großteil mehr Ressentimentbefrachtungen als Einfühlungsvermögen.'<sup>431</sup> Berg himself declares:

Man ist betroffen über die Leichtfertigkeit, mit der einige Kritiker sich des Auftrages erledigen, die 1334 Seiten Text zu beurteilen. Selbst wenn man einräumt, daß ein episches Panorama vom Umfang der Dämonen mit seiner verwirrenden Fülle an Charakteren, den spezifisch wienerischen Nuancen, Gerüchen und Empfindsamkeiten, seinen für den transatlantischen Leser kaum verständlichen inneren Bezügen und Schichtungen dem Kritiker ein hohes Maß an Geduld und Einfühlungsvermögen abfordert, selbst dann ist das Ergebnis dürftig.<sup>432</sup>

Yet, curiously, only a few months later both Hilde Spiel and Johannes A. Boeck, inspired, no doubt, by a well-meaning but short-sighted desire to secure Doderer a place in world literature, contrived to paint an entirely different picture of the response to the translation. In an article worth quoting at length, Spiel emphasizes the value of considering how a writer is assessed in other lands as a necessary corrective on a global scale to possibly extravagant and parochial claims of the greatness of an indigenous literary talent. Spiel goes on:

Gerade in Berlin ... bleibt er [Doderer] noch umstritten. ... Doderer ist zu süddeutsch, zu wort- und bilderreich, zu kasuistisch verschlüsselt und ironisch verbrämt, um in kargen, knappen, trocken-witzigen Norden ohne weiteres durchzudringen. Seine Hausmacht reicht bis zum limes romanus; dort allerdings

ist er überall daheim wie in den weitverzweigten Domänen des Habsburgerreiches.

Fremder noch, ja gänzlich ahnungslos muß ihm das amerikanische Leseublikum gegenübergestanden haben ... Was sollte, so dächte man, ein Mann in Chicago, Oakland oder San Francisco mit einem Epos anzufangen wissen, das bis in die letzten Verästerlungen die vielschichtige Gesellschaft einer mitteleuropäischen Stadt beschreibt? Wie sollte er, wenn schon ein Schöneberger nicht weiß, wo Döbling liegt, die introspektive Eigenart der Bewohner gerade dieser Wiener Vorstadt nachempfinden?

Es wäre ein Wunder, wenn aus dem Aufeinanderprall so weit entfernter Welten nicht gänzliche Konfusion entstünde. Doch das Wunder geschah. Die maßgebliche Kritik begrüßte Doderers Roman ... Und im Nu war die erst Auflage dieser Doppelbände ... ausverkauft.

...

Hiermit betritt Doderer ein zeitweiliges, aber darum nicht weniger ruhmreiches Pantheon. Die Lorbeeren, zu denen er in seiner Heimat und in seinem eigenen Sprachraum kam, sind ihm nun auch im Ausland feierlich verliehen worden. Hier ereignet sich der Fall, in dem eine Wertung und Einordnung hüben und drüben sich wechselseitig bestätigt.<sup>433</sup>

Carefully selecting her material, Spiel emphasizes that only George Steiner and Paul West had raised their critical voices against Doderer's triumphal march into the New World. Yet Boeck's portrayal of the critical response to The Demons is even more one-sided:

Die seitenlangen Berichte und Stellungnahmen in wichtigsten Zeitschriften, Zeitungen und Revuen jenseits des großen Wassers ... flößen dem Kundigen nicht allein einen Respekt besonderer Art vor dem Werk und der Persönlichkeit Heimito von Doderers ein ... Diese Kundgebungen aus ersten Federn des Neuen Kontinents ... machen bewußt, was sich im Trubel unseres literarischen Alltages zu leicht vergißt: daß diesem Mann zugewachsen ist, mehr als ein Dichter Österreichs zu sein, daß er auch in der

Gegenwart mehr auf seinen Schultern trägt, als die Repräsentation unseres Landes gegenüber der Welt unter besonderem Aspekt.<sup>434</sup>

Carefully eschewing all mention of the not infrequent bemusement and downright antipathy which Doderer's novel provokes, Boeck compares the author with no less outstanding literary giants than Pascal, Goethe and Shakespeare, and concludes: 'In solcher Schau müssen wir ihn als Dichter Österreichs zwar nicht abschreiben, doch abgeben an eine höhere Kategorie, an die jener Weltliteratur, die, nationale Grenzen sprengend, bleibendes Gut der Völker ist. Von dorthier, von dort allein, dürfen wir ihn wieder empfangen als einen, der unserem Boden entwuchs, der aus unserer Mitte auszog, Welt schaute und Welt schuf.'<sup>435</sup>

The reality of the critical response to The Demons in the some twenty reviews which could be located was, however, neither black nor white but predictably grey. On the one hand, and notably in the more influential publications such as the New York Times, Herald Tribune and Saturday Review, major literary critics expressed unqualified admiration for the novel:

Not only the brilliance of his technique, but his moral responsiveness to his material makes him the foremost novelist writing in German today.<sup>436</sup>

... an extraordinary novel ... one of the longest and most ambitious novels of modern times.<sup>437</sup>

Narrative skill of a very high order makes this book consistently engrossing.<sup>438</sup>

Not since Thomas Mann's Felix Krull has a work of similar stature been translated from German into English.<sup>439</sup>

Heimito von Doderer's vast and awesome mountain of a book belongs securely on the tiny list of genuinely important novels published in Europe since World War II.<sup>440</sup>

Yet at the same time a number of Doderer's American critics exhibit a singular lack of understanding and sympathy for his Viennese world. Tom Ray, for instance, informs us how 'Von Geyrenhoff (and perhaps von Doderer as well) says that Vienna died on that day in 1927 when the Palais of Justice burned',<sup>441</sup> and concludes: 'One wonders if writers and other spokesmen do not tend to think that their beloved cities and the people who inhabit them cease to exist as they were because their own vision is dimmed by the passing years.'<sup>442</sup> The almost unfathomable depth of such a misunderstanding clearly illustrates how ill-advised the claims of Doderer's universally valid vision were. For despite such postulations, Doderer's work is repeatedly seen as typically 'Germanic' by American reviewers. Thus Lonnie Coleman claims that the novelist explores the intimate relationships in The Demons 'with Germanic thoroughness, if somewhat coldly and impersonally',<sup>443</sup> Peter Deane describes Every Man A Murderer as 'Germanically earnest',<sup>444</sup> and Morris Gilbert asserts that the dramatis personae of the latter novel are 'very close to the "Herren-volk"'.<sup>445</sup> Moreover, one of the most consistent criticisms of The Demons is of the allegedly characteristically Germanic verbosity. Felix E. Hirsch suggests that a 'wise editor might have used his blue pencil here and there',<sup>446</sup> and the anonymous reviewer in Newsweek is convinced that Doderer's mural is 'immense - too vast, too considered in detail, too unhurried, perhaps, for American readers'.<sup>447</sup> Ernest J. Pisko insists that if Doderer's novel 'had been cut to about half its size, it would make twice as strong an impact'.<sup>448</sup> And in a review of Every Man A Murderer Stanley Kauffmann reflects on Doderer's failure to make a lasting impact on the American reading public with The Demons: 'Its chief fault was its large-scale concept: it would have made a quite acceptable novel of conventional length - not by cutting but by a more modest original scheme. Now we have an earlier novel of Doderer's, Every Man A Murderer,



which is a mere 373 pages but which, too, should have been shorter. It would have done better, though not well, as a novella. On evidence so far, Von Doderer's primal fault is this one of basic concept. It is as if he had a sign tacked over his desk: "You are Viennese. Be Leisurely".<sup>449</sup> Similarly, R. V. Cassill describes The Waterfalls of Slunj as 'oppressively long-winded'.<sup>450</sup>

Time has shown, then, that, despite the fanfares sounded on his behalf, Doderer totally failed to make an impression on the American literary scene. The inflated claims as to the outstanding success enjoyed by The Demons were not only premature, but inaccurate and misleading. One only has to compare the sales figures of Doderer's novels with those of other major German novelists in America to illustrate fully the disparity between such claims and the reality of the reception accorded to Doderer there. Whereas Günter Grass's Tin Drum sold over 600,000 copies and hippie-guru Hermann Hesse's works over two million,<sup>451</sup> no more than 4,200 copies of The Demons and a mere 2,800 of Every Man A Murderer found their way into the hands of American readers.<sup>452</sup> The most important question is, however, to what extent Doderer's failure to make a breakthrough in the United States is attributable to mere transatlantic insularity and to what degree Doderer himself is responsible for his lack of success.

On the one hand, there can be little doubt that the success or failure of a translation in America, particularly a translation from the German, though admittedly often merely coincidental, is frequently determined by political or sociological factors, with the literary value of the work of only secondary importance. Doris N. Auerbach has convincingly illustrated in her dissertation on 'The Reception of German Literature in America as Exemplified by the New York Times: 1945 - 1970',<sup>453</sup> that the (understandably) disproportionately strong preoccupation on the part of Americans since World War II with the attitude of German

writers towards the recent historical past frequently clouds their judgement of the aesthetic quality of their work. Given Auerbach's contention that for many Americans there were two types of Germans - good and bad, depending on whether or not they condemned Nazism<sup>454</sup> -, and bearing in mind Doderer's equivocal allegiance to the Nazi party, it is perhaps not surprising that Paul West should describe Doderer as a 'spokesman for the ideology of the extreme Right Wing',<sup>455</sup> and say of the narrator of The Demons: 'He doesn't exactly say that the Slavs and Asiatics are subhuman, but he manages to convey the notion in fairly unambiguous language. No doubt this is a little something he picked up while he was serving in Hitler's Luftwaffe during the Second World War.'<sup>456</sup>

Yet, West's caustic comments notwithstanding, and despite the fact that Die Dämonen is clearly Doderer's most overtly political novel, it is the indirectness, if not obscurity of the political message of the novel that proves to be the major stumbling block for many American readers. Frederic Morton perspicaciously remarks that the 'entire book - up to its crucial point - is cast in the subjunctive, not in the declarative mood',<sup>457</sup> and it comes as no surprise to read that many Americans were somewhat bemused by the lack of direct political engagement on Doderer's part.<sup>458</sup> So arcane, so circuitous, so specifically European, indeed Austrian, are the myriad threads of the political framework of Doderer's novel that it inevitably remains inaccessible for many Americans and does not satisfy their demands, justified or not, for political commitment, and their expectations of a clear political standpoint on the part of post-war German writers.

If the American demands for political 'engagement' might be attributed to transatlantic insularity, it is predictably Doderer's own regional bias that represents the other major obstacle to a full understanding of his work by Americans - despite the frequent protestations to the contrary. Thus Victor Lange informs his readers that Doderer's first major

novel, Die Strudlhofstiege, 'was so intensely preoccupied with the Viennese scene, its intellectual flavor and the subtleties of its social ambience, that it was bound to seem provincial and eccentric'.<sup>459</sup> And it can only be a stereotype image of Vienna that induces Milton Crane to make the following comment on the 'happy ending' in The Demons: 'Perhaps that is sentimental tribute that Vienna exacts of even its serious artists.'<sup>460</sup> A similarly nostalgic and misguided view of Doderer's Vienna is found in reviews of The Waterfalls of Slunj. Felix E. Hirsch declares that the novel 'takes the reader back to the gay and carefree Vienna of Emperor F. Joseph about the turn of the century',<sup>461</sup> and the anonymous reviewer in Time maintains: 'Even the name Vienna sets up resonances that belong to the past: candlelight, slow waltz music, fiacres, linden-tree parks, the Danube and the Prater. ... A courtly and playful Viennese, von Doderer remembers with fondness the city as it was half a century ago.'<sup>462</sup> Much more revealing, however, is George Steiner's criticism of Doderer's 'Vienneseness' in The Demons:

The context of social and political reference in The Demons ... is fantastically parochial. Only an intimate connoisseur of Vienna and of Viennese conventions will get much of a picture of what is going on. A street map is nearly indispensable. Much of the plot hinges on the move of certain characters from one district of Vienna to another, and on all the attendant implications of social flux. To an outsider such matters are arcane and boring ...

Here we come up against one of the most intractable of literary problems. The internecine wars of petty Italian towns of the Middle Ages continue to be fiercely alive in Dante; the Paris of Balzac and the Dublin of Joyce have become a part of the universal legacy of the imagination; the petty contrivings of a handful of Russian Nihilists take on enduring validity in The Possessed. But elsewhere, and distinctly in the case of Doderer, the local framework condemns a book to utter parochial-

ism. Why the difference? Perhaps it takes a master to impose upon a reality as autonomous and diverse as a city the stamp of a new, personal vision. Where a lesser craftsman is at work, the material comes to overwhelm the shape of art. Only a great writer can compel the circumstances and local flurries of his own age to yield their part of eternity. In The Trial, Kafka made of Prague a city terrifyingly relevant to our general condition; we all have our precarious home in it. In The Demons, Doderer makes of Vienna what perhaps it is: a provincial town with a somewhat pompous and unsavory past ...<sup>463</sup>

Steiner's comments not only belie Spiel's extravagant claims as to Doderer's universal validity, but are at the same time a harbinger of the long-term reaction to Doderer's Viennese novels in America. Donald Heiney reveals just how impenetrable the world of The Waterfalls of Slunj is for Americans: 'There are too many characters and they are not well enough defined; the American reader gets hopelessly mixed up in this mass of Austrians, Hungarians, Croats and miscellaneous Balkans.'<sup>464</sup> Similarly, Ernest J. Pisko insists that The Demons 'is overly long and too crowded with episodes which only a Viennese can savor. He will recognize his own friends and acquaintances in the novel's characters. An American would probably feel that he was reading a book interspersed with coded pages.'<sup>465</sup> Just how unbridgeable the gap between the Old World and the New is, can be seen in a review of The Waterfalls of Slunj by John J. Murray, who says of Doderer's 'trickster writing':

In order to fully appreciate such linguistic gymnastics you would need a Baedeker for old Wien, a thesaurus of cross-referencing symbols, a dictionary of polyglot, a basic rule book for playing von Doderer's unique game, a soundtrack of canned laughter to tip you off when you're supposed to laugh, and a transparent map to place over the original in order to show non-sense in perspective with nonsense. I get the feeling

that the author had great fun in writing for the sheer fun of writing. And for what purpose? Purposelessness, I suppose, unless he wants to tell us, 'For the days that are no more, break, break, break, you bastards.'<sup>466</sup>

Finally, even more pertinent here is Joseph P. Bauke's claim that 'The Waterfalls of Slunj' is so superbly translated that the English version is more pleasant to read than Doderer's German with its mannerisms and its Austrian idiosyncracies':<sup>467</sup> Doderer without the very essence of Doderer as the more palatable alternative. In his famous Aspects of the Novel, E. M. Forster writes:

Now, provincialism does not signify in a writer, and may indeed be the chief source of his strength: only a prig or a fool would complain that Defoe is cockneyfied or Thomas Hardy countryfied. But provincialism in a critic is a serious fault. A critic has no right to the narrowness which is the frequent prerogative of the creative artist.<sup>468</sup>

There can be little doubt that much of the criticism levelled at Doderer stems from the narrow-minded insularity of his American critics. It is equally clear that Doderer's deep-rooted 'Vienneseness' is one of his main strengths. And although the author was presented to the American reader through the in many ways distorting prism of translation, there was nevertheless enough left of the distinctive Viennese flavour for the American to recognize and appreciate it as such. On the other hand, the mere fact that so many American readers found it all but impossible to gain access to Doderer's fictional world cannot be attributed to transatlantic parochialism alone. On the contrary, Doderer's own conscious fixation with the localities of his Viennese home is clearly also partly responsible for his failure to capture the imagination of the American

reading public and for his virtual obscurity in the United States today, and this necessarily raises again the vexed question of whether Doderer's fascination with Vienna represents a limitation of his artistic capabilities.

#### VIII Doderer's 'Second Reality'?

Even a brief look at Doderer's published diaries suffices to reveal the author's lifelong preoccupation with Vienna. From Mont de Marsan to Kursk, from Waldsassen to Aarhus and Aalborg, the novelist's thoughts return repeatedly to his native city. The impressions conveyed by the new localities serve to animate the author's thoughts of topographical similarities to, and contrasts with Vienna, and, as Karl Hopf rightly suggests, the greater the geographical distance between the novelist and home, the more intense his memories of and reflections on his native city become.<sup>469</sup> Doderer's attachment to Vienna is encapsulated in the impressions he records of a visit to England in 1954, where he had the opportunity to inspect at first hand the localities of the London sections of Die Dämonen. After passing through Brussels on his way to England, Doderer jots down his first notes on the journey: 'Hauptallee, Prater, so feucht wie hier ...'<sup>470</sup> More significantly, even in the midst of his excursions in London, the author still finds time to reflect on the Vienna of his childhood: 'Weihnachts-Zimmer in der Stammgasse: man war durch ein paar Feiertage ganz da unten befangen.'<sup>471</sup>

In order to appreciate fully the artistic repercussions of Doderer's

fixation with Vienna, one might find it better to approach the subject 'ex-centrally' (to borrow Doderer's term), or indirectly. For, just as the most significant and illuminating aspects of Doderer reception are to be found in the critical response to his 'a-typical' works, so too the author's relationship to his native city is best illustrated in his 'non-Viennese' novels. It is one thing for Doderer to draw heavily on the landscapes and cityscapes of the regions most familiar to him and then to transplant them into the Swabian or Franconian settings of his novels: this is both natural and justified. Yet it is quite another matter when the author apparently finds it necessary to 'hark back' repeatedly to his native city in an ostensibly 'non-Viennese' novel such as Die Merowinger. We have already suggested that the critics' stubborn refusal to acknowledge that Die Merowinger is not related to Vienna was, at least partly, attributable to the overwhelming influence of the monumental novels which are set in Vienna, and to Doderer's image as a Viennese chronicler: but there can be little doubt that such obtrusive and superfluous references to Vienna as the following representative selection from Die Merowinger also contributed to the continued and oversimplified identification of the author with his native city:

Sie [Gerhild] setzte sich also zu Wien fest, wohnte im 'Hotel Meissl & Schadn' am Mehlmarkt, der heute 'Neuer Markt' heißt  
472  
...

Derweil schwirrte Gerhild zu Wien umher ... sah sich auch einiges an, wenn auch nicht das Wesentliche. Den Sommerpalast des Prinzen Eugen von Savoyen, das sogenannte 'Belvedere', hat sie nie aus der Nähe gesehen, die große Oper nie betreten und ebenso wenig etwa die Liechtenstein'sche Galerie. Auch die schöne Umgebung der Stadt blieb ihr fast unbekannt. Dagegen besichtigte sie eingehend das städtische Uhrenmuseum am Schulhof, welches auch die höchst merkwürdige Sammlung der Dichterin Marie von

Ebner-Eschenbach enthält, die eine geborene Gräfin Dubsky gewesen war. (Mer., p.75)

Groß-Quenzel bereist auch die Filialen, und er soll sehr weit von London entfernt vorlängst gesehen worden sein, unter anderem in der Hulesch-Gasse zu Wien, welche, ein letzter Ausläufer der Stadt, sanft ansteigend zu lieblichster Aussicht über die Rebenhügel und Berge führt ... (Mer., p.143)

Mag's manchem paradox erscheinen: doch gibt's im sogenannten 'Marschfelde', nordöstlich von Wien, eine Ortschaft, die 'Groß-Schweinsbart' heißt'. (Mer., p.301)

Such unnecessary interpolations are occasionally irritating and out-of-place, and provide no more information than the scraps of wisdom one would normally expect to find in a travel brochure. More importantly, such allusions to Doderer's native city fulfil no formal function in a novel not set in Vienna. The paradox of Doderer's relationship to Vienna as reflected in his writings is that, whilst in the 'Viennese' novels the city is not merely a topographical backdrop, but the most appropriate vehicle with which to present the multiplicity of interrelated individual destinies and the flux and random confusion of life itself, whilst in the monumental novels of the 1950s the city represents a world theatre, a 'stage on which universal passions and obsessions are carried out,'<sup>473</sup> Doderer's fascination with the minutiae of Viennese life at the same time induces readers and critics alike to stop short of discovering the universal significance of his artistic message, and this in turn helps to perpetuate the myth of Doderer as the engaging Viennese raconteur.

It would appear, then, that Vienna represented for Doderer something akin to a 'second reality' (to use the author's own terminology), a form of 'Befangenheit' from which Doderer never succeeded in detaching himself fully. On the contrary, and in sharp contradistinction to his own doctrine



of passive receptivity and his dogmatic rejection of any conscious attempts to go out and search for what can be provided solely by the 'mechanics' of life itself, Doderer, encouraged by the success of Die Strudlhofstiege, embarked upon a series of programmatic attempts to find concrete localities in his native city which would inspire his artistic sensibility as the now famous stairway had done. In his excellent 'Von der Strudlhofstiege zum Grenzwald. Die Funktion der Topographie in den Romanen Helmito von Doderers', Karl Hopf maintains: 'Doderer unternahm systematisch Stadtwanderungen';<sup>474</sup> this contention is endorsed by the following remark from one of Doderer's published journals: 'Die obere Josephstadt: ein genius loci ungreifbarer Art, etwa hell-karamel, Gegend der Ida W., der Freundin Astri's. Ich suchte im Grunde bei allen Gängen zu Wien immer nur neue genia loci kennen zu lernen, danach strebte ich sogar ganz intensiv.'<sup>475</sup>

One is tempted to suggest that Doderer's obsession with Vienna was almost tantamount to a dependence on his native city, and this view is substantiated if one looks at those sections in the 'Viennese' novels which are not set in the city itself, such as the London passages in Die Dämonen. For, although Doderer made the trip to London for the specific purpose of absorbing the atmosphere of the localities he had chosen to use in his novel, there can be no doubt that the London sections are less well realized than the 'Viennese' chapters of Die Dämonen. What is missing is the intense emotional involvement born of the wealth of memories and associations which bound the novelist to his native city. In Landshut, on the last day of December 1949, Doderer noted in his diary:

Die produktiven Mechanismen in einem Menschen können Bindungen eingehen mit bestimmten Umgebungen, Milieus, Haltungen: dann wird es mit Vielem, was bisher Spiel, plötzlich Ernst: mit dem

sogenannten Lebens-Stil also. Am Ende kann Einer nur mehr in Neulengbach, Cagnes-sur-mer oder Paris, in Payerbach, am Semmering oder im XIII. Wiener Gemeindebezirk ganz zu sich selbst kommen: wenn auch noch immer von da aus überall hin. Manche bedürfen auch gewisser Zeitalter und ihrer Figuren, wie etwa Hofmannsthal seines 18. Jahrhunderts (und Gütersloh seines neunzehnten) und seiner puppenhaften Figuren aus der Commedia dell'arte: er wäre ohne seinen Scaramuccia geliefert gewesen: und war zugleich dem allen schon ausgeliefert, wie die Verflachung des Andreas-Fragments uns zeigt, sobald sich nur die Handlung einmal von Kärnten nach Venedig verlegt.<sup>476</sup>

Similarly, Doderer himself - though he was perhaps not consciously aware of it - was able to realize his artistic potential fully only when he had the secure basis of his native city to support him. And although within these self-imposed limitations Doderer was able to create a convincing fictional world fraught with universally valid problems, this 'world' was, and still is all too easily identified and confused with the 'real' Vienna in which the novelist lived and worked.

## IX Conclusion

The reasons for the spectacular variety of responses and interpretations which Doderer's Die Merowinger provoked, and for the ultimate lack of success of the novel are manifold and complex, but a proper evaluation of the reception of this novel is essential if one wants to arrive at an understanding of Doderer's reception as a whole.

As we have seen, many of Doderer's critics greeted Die Merowinger with extravagant but unwarranted panegyrics, a perhaps predictable reaction in the light of the twofold dilemma that confronted the critics. On the one hand, the critics were understandably reluctant to adopt an unequivocally negative position vis-à-vis an established and respected literary figure such as Doderer; and, on the other hand, many of the critics quite obviously failed to differentiate between their critical duty and the superficial reading pleasure the novel undoubtedly offers. A closer look at the structure of the novel reveals that it comprises a host of entertaining vignettes, many of which are susceptible of more than one interpretation. Most reviewers chose to emphasize one individual aspect or even one single possible interpretation of such an aspect, and hence lost sight of the novel as a whole. The novel, in turn, fails because the author tries to cram too much into it and its formal unity is vitiated.

The critics' perplexity in the face of Die Merowinger derived primarily not from the fact that Doderer attempted there any great structural innovations - the 'Viennese' novels, too, were constructed on the principle of 'epicentres' without a straightforward story line - but that the subject matter and topographical location of the novel did not accord with the critics' expectations. Gone, too, was the engaging chattiness of the 'Viennese' novels, which had elicited such critical approbation. Hence, many reviewers were content to dismiss Die Merowinger as an a-typical by-product to be subsumed under the heading 'grotesqueries'<sup>477</sup> or some other such arbitrary classification. Classifications are, of course, as E. D. Hirsch rightly points out, useful conceptual tools in controlling a subject matter, provided the critic is not tempted to forget that they are merely arbitrary and heuristic, rather than constitutive.<sup>478</sup> In one of his published diaries, Doderer asserted: 'Ich hätte im Grunde nichts da-

gegen, das Leben nicht mehr auf den alten Schauplätzen zu führen: es erhält so unsere biographische Handschrift allzu leicht den Charakter eines Palimpsestes.'<sup>479</sup> What Doderer's critics did by placing Die Merowinger in a category outwith the mainstream of his literary production was to prescribe - more or less explicitly, depending on the individual critic - that Doderer should re-work the subject matter and setting of his 'Viennese' novels, provide, as it were, a 'palimpsest' with more and more variations on the theme of the life of 'homo viennensis'. These demands are best illustrated by the almost audible 'sigh of relief' which informs the reviews of Die Wasserfälle von Slunj.

We have already suggested that Doderer himself, in his repeated and obtrusive allusions to Vienna, paved the way for his critics' reluctance to accept novels such as Die Merowinger as 'non-Viennese'. Hence, Doderer was at least indirectly responsible for the reviewers' insistence on interpreting and evaluating Die Merowinger in terms of its predecessors. Yet a closer examination of the text of Die Merowinger reveals that on a deeper, more subtle level, too, Doderer guided the critics' attention in the direction of his previous work. Harald Weinrich has wisely observed that every author takes into account a real or imaginary readership when writing a book, and that every text contains certain instructions or 'signals' from the author designed at helping or enabling the reader to find his way in the fictional world presented in the text.<sup>480</sup> If one examines the reader implicitly addressed in Die Merowinger, it soon becomes evident that an 'adequate' reading of the text is conceivable only for a reader who has some knowledge of Doderer's biography and previous works. For the 'signals' provided in subtle allusions to 'Mikroschriftur' and 'Buntschrift' (Mer., p.149), to Doderer's studies at the 'Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung' (Mer., p.18 et passim), or to his infamous antipathy towards the theatre (Mer., p.179ff.), can be interpreted

correctly only by someone familiar with such details from the novelist's life. The reader's compliance with Doderer's equally notorious sensitivity to certain odours is clearly solicited in an ironic aside such as the following: 'Es ist bekannt, daß bei Personen von hochadeliger Abkunft die Nase besonders empfindlich ist, zum Unterschiede von jener des gemeinen Mannes (humili natu), der ja in seinen Umgebungen mit einer so feinen Nase garnicht zu leben vermöchte' (Mer., p.232). Similarly, only a reader aware of the fact that Doderer was once the subject of a 'cover story' in Der Spiegel, can understand the self-mockery of the following remark: 'Eine illustrierte Zeitung hat einmal von ihm [Doctor Döblinger] ein Bild gebracht, mit einer Treppenanlage im Hintergrunde (die in einem seiner Bücher vorkommt), davor er steht, aufgeberstelt und aufgefressen, recht ordinär' (Mer., p.123). Finally, the narrator in Die Merowinger explicitly identifies the reader he has in mind as one who is able to recognize the true identity of the ubiquitous Doctor Döblinger:

Den Doctor Döblinger aber greifen wir lieber mit der Prosa-Zange an. Seine Verprügelung bildet ein Postulat poetischer Gerechtigkeit. Zudem empfiehlt sie sich noch aus einem weniger auf der Hand liegenden Grunde. Nämlich um den Grimm des Lesers zu sänftigen ..., seinen Grimm gegen den Autor nämlich: da aber gedachter Leser längst dessen Beziehungen zu unserem Doctor Döblinger durchschaut hat, so besänftigen wir, diesen verprügeln lassend, den Leser gleich auch in bezug auf jenen. (Mer., p.305)

Having thus identified the reader or readership for which Die Merowinger was presumably intended, we can now draw two final conclusions. First, the puns, conceits and self-mockery which can be fully appreciated only by Doderer's 'own' readership mean yet another self-imposed limitation to the general intelligibility of the novel, and thus strengthen the

impression that this is a book for 'insiders' only. At the same time, the ultimate lack of success of Die Merowinger can be attributed to the fact that Doderer failed - or perhaps deliberately refused - to pay adequate attention to the rigidity of his readers' expectations. How could a reader who asked for, indeed demanded more 'Viennese' novels, be expected to appreciate the self-parody in a remark such as the following:

Ich muß' die Sachen auf die Spitze treiben,  
und niemand wird mehr an der Chronik schreiben. (Mer., p.182)

In the final analysis, Doderer was thwarted by the inflexibility of an image with which he had come to be identified, but an image which he himself had helped to create: that of the most 'Viennese' of Viennese writers.

## Notes

1. Herbert Eisenreich, 'Licht + Schatten = mehr Licht', in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer, edited by Xaver Schaffgotsch, München (Biederstein), 1972, pp.39-47 (p.41).
2. Heimito von Doderer, Meine neunzehn Lebensläufe und neun andere Geschichten, München (Biederstein), 1966, p.36.
3. Inge Meidinger-Geise, 'Sein Leben erkennen ... Zum 70. Geburtstag von Heimito von Doderer', Die Tat (Zürich), 3 September 1966.
4. Hilde Spiel, 'Ein Fenster auf Österreich. Zum 70. Geburtstag Heimito von Doderers', Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (Frankfurt am Main), 5 September 1966.
5. Inge Meidinger-Geise, 'Sein Leben erkennen ...', op. cit.
6. Armin Mohler, 'Ein Mann für den Nobelpreis. Heimito von Doderer zum 70. Geburtstag', Die Welt (Hamburg), 5 September 1966.
7. Jochen Schmidt, 'Reichlich breitgewalzter Scherz', Der Mittag (Düsseldorf), 17 November 1962.
8. Ernst Stein, 'Monumentaler Eigensinn. Der neue Roman von Heimito von Doderer', Die Zeit (Hamburg), 11 January 1963.
9. Heimito von Doderer, Commentarii 1951 bis 1956: Tagebücher aus dem Nachlaß, edited by Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, München (Biederstein), 1976, p.531.
10. Ibid., p.539. See also pp.546, 547, 551.
11. Compare Heimito von Doderer, Tangenten: Tagebuch eines Schriftstellers 1940-1950, München (Biederstein), 1964, p.638: 'Alle Kräfte wichen; alle Schwächen traten hervor, ... Wahrlich, ich hatte mir die Zeit nach der Vollendung des Werks als eine glückliche, gelöste vorgestellt: und es wurde der schlimmsten eine.' See also pp.601, 602, 603, 633, 640, 643, 645, 650, 653, 736-737, 807. This state of depressive exhaustion appears to have been a regular occurrence after the completion of a work, and this is endorsed in a letter to the author from Doderer's sister, Frau Astrid von Stummer-Doderer, 28 October 1982, in which the latter states: 'Heimito sagte mir einmal, daß er sich in seine momentane Arbeit ... so einlebt, daß er sich nach Beendigung der Arbeit wie ausgehöhlt fühlt und depressiv ...' Compare also Tangenten, p.478: '... bei meiner Erschöpfung nach Ein Mord ...'
12. Doderer, Commentarii 1951 bis 1956, op. cit., p.531.
13. Ibid., p.537.
14. Armin Mohler, 'Der erste von No.7. Über Doderers neuen Roman', Der Monat (Berlin), November 1963.
15. Armin Mohler, 'Erkenntnis vollzieht sich nur in Sprache. Wiener Romancier und Philosoph: zum Tode Heimito von Doderers', Die Welt (Hamburg), 27 December 1966.
16. Wolfgang Grözinger, 'Der intellektuelle Erzähler', Hochland (München), 49 (1956), no.2, 177-185 (p.179).

17. Alexander Baldus, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Dämonen', Begegnung (Köln), no.19, 1 September 1956.
18. Eugène Susini, 'Heimito von Doderer: Un des plus grands écrivains de notre temps', Le Figaro (Paris), exact date unknown (December 1966); also appeared under the title 'Heimito von Doderer: in memoriam', Le Figaro (Paris), 27 December 1966.
19. Herbert M. Waidson, 'Heimito von Doderer's "Demons"', GL&L (Oxford), New Series 11 (1957/58), no.3, 214-224 (p.219).
20. Doderer, Commentarii 1951 bis 1956, 'Nachwort des Herausgebers', p.576.
21. Ibid., pp.56-57.
22. Ibid., pp.88-89.
23. Hans Flesch-Brunningen, 'Doderer ist Wien. Ein Hörbild über den österreichischen Dichter Heimito von Doderer', Westdeutscher Rundfunk (Köln), 1 December 1960.
24. Doderer, Commentarii 1951 bis 1956, op. cit., pp.558-559.
25. Ibid., p.555.
26. Helmut Uhlig, 'Erzähler als Lyriker', Der Tag (Berlin), 24 August 1958.
27. Armin Mohler, 'Der erste von No.7. Über Doderers neuen Roman', op. cit.
28. Anonymous, 'Heimito von Doderer: Ein Weg im Dunkeln', Stuttgarter Nachrichten (Stuttgart), 12 July 1958.
29. Armin Mohler, 'Gedichte von Doderer', Die Tat (Zürich), 28 December 1957.
30. Jürgen Eyssen, 'Heimito von Doderer: Ein Weg im Dunkeln', Bücherei und Bildung (Reutlingen, Bremen), no.5, 1958.
31. Anonymous, 'Ein Weg im Dunkeln', Süddeutsche Zeitung (München), 26/27 April 1958.
32. Anonymous, 'Ein Weg im Dunkeln', Die Zukunft (Wien), no.10, 1957.
33. Helmut Uhlig, 'Erzähler als Lyriker', op. cit.
34. Curt Hohoff, 'Ein Weg im Dunkeln. Doderers unglückliche Liebe zur Lyrik', Christ und Welt (Stuttgart), 27 March 1958; also appeared under the slightly less critical title 'Verse eines Romanciers', in Der Tagesspiegel (Berlin), 9 March 1958.
35. José A. Palma Caetano, 'Ein Interview', in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer, op. cit., pp.33-38 (p.33).
36. Mohler, 'Gedichte von Doderer', op. cit.
37. Letters to the author from Glock & Lutz Verlag, 2 September 1982, and Verlags AG Die Arche, 14 September 1982.
38. M.N., 'Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen. Kleinwerke des österreichischen Erzählers Heimito von Doderer', Tagesanzeiger (Zürich), 17 October 1959.
39. E.S., 'Alte und neue Prosa von Heimito von Doderer', Neue Württembergische Zeitung (Göppingen), 19 July 1960.



40. Anonymous, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen', Die Welt der Bücher (Freiburg i. Br.), no.2, 1959, p.112.
41. Franz Schonauer, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen', Hessischer Rundfunk (Frankfurt am Main), 7 November 1959.
42. Marianne Pich, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen', St. Galler Tagblatt (St. Gallen), 17 December 1959.
43. Anonymous, 'Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen', Südwestfunk (Baden-Baden), 1 June 1960. See also Helmut Olles, 'Der Begriff des Lebens. Erzählungen von Heimito von Doderer', Kölnische Rundschau (Köln), 18 October 1959: '... mag Doderer auch, wenn er Geschichten schreibt, keinen Raum für die ihm eigentlich gemäße breite Entfaltung, für den verzweigten Fluß der Sprache haben.'
44. Ernst Stein, 'Alte Schubladen verschiedenen Inhalts. Zwei österreichische Erzähler: Heimito von Doderer und Leo Perutz', Die Zeit (Hamburg), 30 October 1959.
45. Wolf Jobst Siedler, 'Heimito von Doderers gesammelte Erzählungen', Der Tagesspiegel (Berlin), 8 November 1959.
46. Benno von Wiese, Novelle, fourth edition, Stuttgart (Metzler), 1969, p.17.
47. The young knight Federigo degli Alberighi, in despair over his unrequited love of a lady, squanders his whole fortune except for his falcon. One day the lady visits him to ask him for the falcon for her sick son, only to discover that he has already killed the falcon in order to provide the lady with a fitting meal. The lady is totally transformed by this discovery, marries Alberighi, and bestows her riches on him. Paul Heyse put forward the argument that every novella ought to have a 'falcon' which distinguishes it from a thousand other stories.
48. Inge Meidinger-Geise, 'Roman muet', Zeitwende (Gütersloh), no.2, 1967.
49. Inge Meidinger-Geise, 'Heimito von Doderer: Frühe Prosa', Zeitwende (Gütersloh), no.8, 1969.
50. Inge Meidinger-Geise, 'Zugängiger Grenzwald. Doderers letztes Zeugnis', Die Tat (Zürich), exact date unknown (December 1967). Held by Biederstein Verlag, Munich.
51. Inge Meidinger-Geise, 'Des Künstlers Schicksal liegt in seiner Technik. Zum 70. Geburtstag von Heimito von Doderer', Echo der Zeit (Recklinghausen), 4 September 1966.
52. Ibid.
53. Inge Meidinger-Geise, 'Symphonischer Auftakt. Doderers neuer Roman', Echo der Zeit (Recklinghausen), 29 September 1963.
54. Humbert Fink, 'Verwehte Welt', Süddeutscher Rundfunk (Stuttgart), 31 October 1963.
55. Hans Gensecke, 'Wiener Tradition', Telegraf (Berlin), 20 July 1958.
56. Hermann Lenz, on Ein Mord den jeder begeht, Deutsche Rundschau (Gelsenkirchen), no.6, 1958.
57. Karl Silex, 'Ein früher Roman Doderers', Die Bücherkommentare

(Stuttgart), 15 March 1958.

58. W.T., 'Der frühe Doderer', Hannover'sche Zeitung (Hannover), 25 January 1969.
59. Hermann Fauler, 'Heimito von Doderer: Ein Mord den jeder begeht', Südwestfunk (Baden-Baden), 15 January 1959.
60. Ibid.
61. Helmut Olles, 'Der Begriff des Lebens', op. cit.
62. Wolf Jobst Siedler, 'Heimito von Doderers gesammelte Erzählungen', op. cit.
63. M.N., 'Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen', op. cit.
64. Franz Schonauer, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen', op. cit.
65. Anonymous, on Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen, Süddeutscher Rundfunk (Stuttgart), 16 February 1960.
66. Anonymous, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen', Die Welt der Bücher, op. cit.
67. Hilde Spiel, 'Heimito von Doderers kleine Prosa', Süddeutsche Zeitung (München), 28/29 November 1959.
68. Wolfgang Paul, 'Der gepeinigte Mensch', Der Tag (Berlin), 1 November 1959.
69. Anonymous, on Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen, Südwestfunk (Baden-Baden), op. cit.
70. Ibid.
71. Otto F. Beer, 'Der große Grimm der Merowinger', Neues Österreich (Wien), 17 November 1962.
72. Anonymous, 'Die leidige Theaterspielerei', Arbeiterzeitung (Wien), 21 July 1961.
73. Wolf Jobst Siedler, 'Heimito von Doderers gesammelte Erzählungen', op. cit.
74. See Ernst Stein, 'Alte Schubladen verschiedenen Inhalts', op. cit.: '... bevor man sie im Kielwasser zweier Erfolgswälzer schwimmen läßt.' See also Schonauer, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen', op. cit.: 'Ich bin nicht der Meinung, daß die Herausgabe des Bandes im Interesse des Hauptwerkes, als eine notwendige Ergänzung, geschah, sondern mehr der Überlegung entsprang, daß es bei der Prominenz Doderers nunmehr auch möglich sein müsse, diese unerheblichen, aber reizvollen Proben seines epischen Talentes ans Publikum zu bringen.'
75. Doderer, Tangenten, op. cit., p.733. Doderer had, however, toyed with the idea of 'die totale Familie' as early as October 1939. Compare Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, 'On the posthumous papers of Heimito von Doderer', in 'An International Symposium in Memory of Heimito von Doderer (1896-1966)', Books Abroad (Norman, Okl.), 42 (1968), no.3, 343-384 (p.371).
76. Beer, 'Der große Grimm der Merowinger', op. cit.
77. Anonymous, on Die Merowinger, La Revue de Bruxelles (Bruxelles), 15

February 1963.

78. Armin Mohler, 'Merowinger für den Staatsanwalt', Christ und Welt (Stuttgart), 21 September 1962.
79. Wilhelm Krüger, 'Berstende Phantasie', Darmstädter Echo (Darmstadt), 12 December 1962. Hilde Spiel offers 380 pages for DM 17.50 ('Der Bart der Merowinger', Süddeutsche Zeitung (München), 10/11 November 1962); Walter Lennig 366 pages for DM 17.80 ('Eine epische Posse', Sonntagsblatt (Hamburg), 26 May 1963); Harry Neumann 367 pages for DM 16.80 ('... so hat es doch Methode', Der Tag (Berlin), 25 November 1962); Otto F. Beer 364 pages for DM 17.50 ('Der große Grimm der Merowinger', op. cit.); and finally Ivar Ivask 386 pages for DM 16.80 ('Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', Books Abroad (Norman, Okl.), 37 (1963), no.3, pp.303-304 (p.303)).
80. Krüger, 'Berstende Phantasie', op. cit.
81. Paul Patera, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', Moderna Språk (Saltsjö-Duval), 5 (1963), 360-362 (p.361).
82. Ibid., p.361.
83. Michael Prager, '"Die Wut des Zeitalters ist tief"', Extrablatt (Wien), July/August 1979, pp.74-77 (p.75).
84. Wolfgang H. Fleischer, 'Von Doderer zu Pelimbert', in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer, op. cit., pp.48-61 (p.58).
85. Prager, '"Die Wut des Zeitalters ist tief"', op. cit., p.75.
86. Edgar Traugott, 'Doderers karnevalistischer Auftritt', Nürnberger Zeitung (Nürnberg), 26/27 January 1963.
87. Ibid.
88. Anonymous, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', Lübecker Nachrichten (Lübeck), 8 December 1962.
89. Schmidt, 'Reichlich breitgewalzter Scherz', op. cit.
90. Patera, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', op. cit., p.362.
91. Margaret Anne Marks, 'The City in the Twentieth Century German Novel: its Treatment in Works by Rilke, Döblin, Koeppen and Doderer' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, King's College, London, 1976), p.258.
92. See Waidson, 'Heimito von Doderer's "Demons"', op. cit., p.218; Otto F. Beer, 'Die Dämonen von "Döbling"', Der Standpunkt (Meran), 30 November 1956; Gerhard Pallmann, 'Doderers Dämonen', Die Bücher-kommentare (Stuttgart), 5 (1956), no.3, 15 September 1956.
93. Edwin Hartl, 'Agression als Romanthema', Salzburger Nachrichten (Salzburg), 27 October 1962; see also Mohler, 'Merowinger für den Staatsanwalt', op. cit.
94. Piero Rismondo, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', Die Presse (Wien), 13 October 1962; see also Franz Sulke, 'Vom Grimme in der Zivilisation Übermannt?', Wort und Wahrheit (Freiburg i. Br., Wien), 18 (1963), no.3.
95. Karl August Horst, 'Wut ohne Pathos', Merkur (Stuttgart), no.12, 1963, pp.1209-1214 (p.1211).
96. Emil Franzel, 'Die totale Parodie', Deutsche Tagespost (Würzburg),

12/13 October 1962; see also Johann A. Boeck, 'Doderer und sein offenes Labyrinth', Die Tat (Zürich), 17 November 1962.

97. Beer, 'Der große Grimm der Merowinger', op. cit.
98. Anonymous, on Die Merowinger, circular of the 'Literarische Gesellschaft', Hannover. Undated manuscript held by Biederstein Verlag, Munich.
99. Neumann, '... so hat es doch Methode', op. cit.
100. Lennig, 'Eine epische Posse', op. cit.
101. Traugott, 'Doderers karnevalistischer Auftritt', op. cit.
102. Anonymous, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', Lübecker Nachrichten, op. cit.
103. Ibid.
104. KPM, 'Scherz, Satire, ... tiefere Bedeutung?', Westfälische Nachrichten (Münster), 8 December 1962.
105. Erich Kock, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', Westdeutscher Rundfunk (Köln), 6 December 1962.
106. Karl M. Benedek, 'Heimito Doderer oder: Die Ideologie der Ideologielosigkeit', Tagebuch (Wien), February 1958, p.4.
107. Walter Schneider, 'Heimito von Doderers Tangenten', Schweizerische Radio- und Fernsehgesellschaft (Studio Zürich), 12 March 1965. See also Paul Kruntorad, 'Heimito von Doderer. Analogia Entis', in Kindlers Literaturgeschichte der Gegenwart: Autoren, Werke, Themen, Tendenzen seit 1945. Österreichische Literatur, edited by Hilde Spiel, Zürich/München (Kindler), 1976, pp.164-174 (p.173): '... und die zahlreichen "vons", wie auch Doderer eines besaß und verwendete, obwohl amtlicherweise die Führung aller Adelstitel in Österreich untersagt ist ...'
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111. Ibid.
112. Spiel, 'Der Bart der Merowinger', op. cit.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid.
115. M.R. Mitchell, 'Heimito von Doderer as a Social Realist' (unpublished B. Litt. dissertation, Oxford 1969/70), pp.171-172.
116. Lutz-Werner Wolff, Wiedereroberte Außenwelt: Studien zur Erzählweise Heimito von Doderers am Beispiel des 'Romans No.7', Göttingen (Kümmerle), 1969, p.268.
117. Anonymous, 'Die Merowinger', Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung (Würzburg), 10 May 1964.
118. Klaus Colberg, on Die Merowinger, Bayerischer Rundfunk (München), 16 March 1963.

119. Anonymous, 'Packt ihn und zwackt ihn', Der Spiegel (Hamburg), 30 January 1963.
120. Alfred Holzinger, 'Doderers Wut-Buch', Sprache im technischen Zeitalter (Stuttgart, Köln), 6 (1963), 476-479 (p.476).
121. Ibid., p.479.
122. Ch. Wentinck, 'Die Merowinger', Elseviers Weekblad (Amsterdam), 23 February 1963: 'Given these - and other - acclamations, the reviewer who has just finished Doderer's latest work, Die Merowinger, naturally feels prejudiced in his judgement.'
123. Ibid.: 'What a lot of rubbish!' For equally scathing reviews, see Stein, 'Monumentaler Eigensinn', op. cit.; v, 'Mordsblödsinn', Badische Zeitung (Freiburg i. Br.), 15/16 December 1962; Günter Blöcker, 'Ein "Mordsblödsinn"', Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (Frankfurt am Main), 10 November 1962.
124. Anonymous, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', Die Barke (München), no.4, 1962.
125. Johann A. Boeck, 'Das diskrete Ja zur Welt', Die Furche (Wien), 10 November 1962.
126. Ibid.
127. Boeck, 'Doderer und sein offenes Labyrinth', op. cit.
128. Anton Krättli, 'Die Merowinger', Neues Winterthurer Tagblatt (Winterthur), 17 November 1962. See also Armin Ayren, 'Über die grundlose Wut', Stuttgarter Zeitung (Stuttgart), 28 October 1978.
129. Kuno Raeber, on Commentarii 1951 bis 1956, Bayerischer Rundfunk (München), 5 October 1977.
130. Anonymous, on Die Merowinger, La Revue de Bruxelles, op. cit.
131. Herbert Eisenreich, 'Die totale Tragödie, und wie man sie meistert', Radio Bremen (Bremen), 7 June 1963.
132. Anonymous, on Die Merowinger, Het Laatste Nieuws (Bruxelles), 12 November 1962: 'the three great works we have read from German-speaking literary production since the war.'
133. Mitchell, 'Heimito von Doderer as a Social Realist', op. cit., p.172.
134. Anonymous, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', Bücherschiff (Frankfurt am Main), no.7, 1962.
135. Michel Raus, 'Glossen zu Doderer', d'letzburger Land (Luxembourg), 11 September 1970.
136. See, for instance, Wolfgang Grözinger, 'Das Gefängnis Gesellschaft', Hochland (München), 55 (1962/63), 168-176 (p.175); KPM, 'Scherz, Satire, ... tiefere Bedeutung?', op. cit.; Neumann, '... so hat es doch Methode', op. cit.; Eleonore Staub, 'Die groteske Mär vom letzten Merowinger', Tages-Anzeiger (Zürich), 28 February 1963; anonymous, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', Bücherschiff, op. cit.
137. See, for instance, Grözinger, 'Das Gefängnis Gesellschaft', op. cit., p.175; Staub, 'Die groteske Mär', op. cit.; Eisenreich, 'Die totale Tragödie', op. cit.; Erwin Dassel [= Ludwig Altwens], 'Die

totale Familie der Merowinger', Münchner Merkur (München), 1/2 December 1962; r.g., 'Ein großer komischer Roman', Basler Nachrichten (Basel), 8 February 1963; Jürgen Eyssen uses the comparison with Jean Paul for the opposite purpose: 'Neben der blühenden Phantasie des großen Wunsiedlers scheint mir jedenfalls der Witz Doderers trocken, abgestanden und ausgesprochen papieren zu sein ...' ('Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', Bücherei und Bildung (Reutlingen, Bremen), no.1/2, 1963).

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139. Heinz Keil, 'Lächerliche Maßlosigkeit', Behaim-Blätter (Darmstadt), no.4, 1963. The somewhat misleading title of this highly enthusiastic review induced Belloin-Nebahay to cite it as one of the negative reviews of Die Merowinger ('L'Œuvre romanesque de Heimito von Doderer vue par la presse', Etudes Germaniques (Paris), 35 (1980), no.3, 300-315 (pp.311-312)).
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144. Inge Meidinger-Geise, 'Konsequenzen grimmiger Phantasie', Echo der Zeit (Recklinghausen), 10 March 1963.
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148. Inge Meidinger-Geise, 'Konsequenzen grimmiger Phantasie', op. cit.
149. Spiel, 'Der Bart der Merowinger', op. cit.
150. KPM, 'Scherz, Satire, ... tiefere Bedeutung?', op. cit.
151. Blöcker, 'Ein "Mordsblödsinn"', op. cit.
152. Ibid.
153. Anna Maria dell'Agli, 'Postilla a Doderer: I "Merovingi"', Annali Sez. Germanica (Istituto orientale di Napoli), 6 (1963), 83-99 (p.89): 'For Hulesch and Quenzel ... irascibility is the terrain for a simple experiment, the breach through which the malignant demons of the irrational penetrate the human psyche ...'
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159. Blöcker, 'Ein "Mordsblödsinn"', op. cit.
160. Karl August Horst, 'Wut und Wahn. Zu Heimito von Doderers Roman Die Merowinger', Neue Zürcher Zeitung (Zürich), 1 November 1962.
161. Keil, 'Lächerliche Maßlosigkeit', op. cit.
162. Boeck, 'Doderer und sein offenes Labyrinth', op. cit.
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174. Paul F. Guenther, 'Heimito von Doderer's "Magnum Opus Austriacum"', Papers on Language and Literature (Edwardsville, Ill.), 2 (1966), 81-90 (p.85).
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  196. Belloin-Nebhay, 'L'Œuvre romanesque', op. cit., p.301.
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214. Ibid., p.156.
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216. Ibid., p.82.
217. Ibid., p.78.
218. Goertz, 'Liebenswertes Österreich', op. cit.; Ivar Ivask, 'Heimito von Doderer's Die Dämonen', Books Abroad (Norman, Okl.), 31 (1957), 363-365 (p.365); dell'Agli, 'Postilla a Doderer', op. cit., p.95; Walter Weiß, 'Die Literatur der Gegenwart in Österreich', in Die deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart: Aspekte und Tendenzen, edited by Manfred Durzak, Stuttgart (Reclam), 1971, pp.386-399 (p.389); Paul Krontorad, 'Heimito von Doderer. Analogia Entis', in Kindlers Literaturgeschichte der Gegenwart: Autoren, Werke, Themen, Tendenzen seit 1945. Die zeitgenössische Literatur Österreichs, edited by Hilde Spiel, Zürich/München (Kindler), 1976, pp.164-174 (p.170).
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  244. 'Diskussion zu den Beiträgen Neck und Botz', in Die Ereignisse des 15. Juli 1927, op. cit., pp.181-199 (p.184): Botz maintains: 'Die Rolle des sogenannten Mobs oder Lumpenproletariats ist zahlenmäßig nicht sehr bedeutend anzusetzen.'
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  248. Cited by Botz, Gewalt in der Politik, op. cit., p.151.
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  269. Ibid., p.31.
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  277. Humbert Fink, 'Österreichisches Zweigestirn. Die Erzähler Gütersloh und Doderer', Der Monat (Berlin), 15 (1963), no.176, 61-66 (p.62).
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  281. Georg Schmid, Doderer lesen: Zu einer historischen Theorie der literarischen Praxis. Essai, Salzburg (Neugebauer), 1978, p.182.
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291. Hans Kricheldorf, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Merowinger', Neue Deutsche Hefte (Berlin), 10 (1963), no.91, pp.110-112 (p.112).
292. Franzel, 'Die totale Parodie', op. cit.
293. A.E. Murch, The Development of the Detective Novel, London (Peter Owen), 1958, p.175.
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295. Anonymous, on Die Merowinger, La Revue de Bruxelles, op. cit.; comparisons to Balzac can be found throughout the reviews of Doderer's works.
296. Doderer, Tangenten, op. cit., p.88; see also Heimito von Doderer, 'Grundlagen und Funktion des Romans', in Doderer, Die Wiederkehr der Drachen, op. cit., pp.149-175 (p.159).
297. Heimito von Doderer, Das letzte Abenteuer: Erzählung mit einem autobiographischen Nachwort, Stuttgart (Reclam), 1953, 'Autobiographisches Nachwort', p.124.
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306. Edwin Hartl, 'Pro und kontra Doderer', Die Furche (Wien), 27 November 1976.
307. Eisenreich, 'Licht + Schatten', op. cit., p.41.
308. Letter to Gütersloh, 21 April 1951, cited by Fischer, Studien, op. cit., pp.4-5. There is no evidence of Gütersloh having pub-

- lished such a review, or, for that matter, of any review of Die Strudlhofstiege ever having appeared in Die Weltpresse.
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  310. Doderer, 'Das Mark der Kritik', op. cit., p.383.
  311. Michael Scharang, 'Der rasonierende Kritiker', in 'Doderer und die Kritiker', with contributions by Béla Abody, Paul Kruntorad, Michael Scharang and J. Peter Stern, Neues Forum (Wien), 14 (1967), 622-629 (p.627).
  312. Doderer, Tangenten, op. cit., p.348.
  313. Letter to author from Doderer's sister, Frau Astrid von Stummer-Doderer, 28 October 1982: 'er sagte zu mir, sie seien notwendig, erkennen aber oft nicht das Wesentliche (was ja einen Künstler verstimmen muß!)' Compare also Doderer's somewhat scornful reference to reviewers of Die Strudlhofstiege, in Commentarii 1951 bis 1956, op. cit., p.475.
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### CONCLUSION

In an article on Doderer's publications in the 1920s, Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler declares:

Das Paradox ...., daß erst rund dreißig Jahre später dem Autor Anerkennung zuteil wurde und er in den fünfziger Jahren geradezu zum Repräsentanten österreichischer Prosa erklärt werden konnte, die Thematik seines Werkes aber die Zeit um den Ersten Weltkrieg reflektiert und zahlreiche Texte bereits in den zwanziger Jahren veröffentlicht waren, wirft mit Recht die Frage nach den Gründen dieser Spätrezeption auf.<sup>1</sup>

Schmidt-Dengler's question as to the reason for Doderer's belated, but nonetheless emphatic literary breakthrough in the 1950s, has never been fully answered. With the benefit of historical hindsight, it is now possible to attempt to elucidate why Doderer shot to literary stardom when he did, and why his recognition by a general reading public, and, increasingly, by a specialist readership, too, appears to have been

relatively shortlived.

In the preface to his monograph on Doderer, Michael Bachem talks of Doderer's 'untimely appearance on the literary scene - everyone knows that realists and humorists belong in the nineteenth century'.<sup>2</sup> Yet a closer examination of Doderer's reception in its historical and political context reveals that his meteoric rise to literary fame was anything but 'untimely'. Nor was it coincidental. On the contrary, Doderer's success in the 1950s and his current fall from literary grace can be attributed to a large extent to changes in literary tastes and in the historical and political conditions which are reflected in the divergent demands readers made then and make now of literature.

Indeed, it might not be inapposite to speculate that (to put it in simple terms) Doderer's monumental novels of the 1950s offered readers exactly what they wanted then; or, to be more precise, these novels, at least on the surface level, provided readers with an opportunity to take out of them only as much as they wanted to. For, despite the difficulties Doderer's gargantuan novels present for the specialized literary critic, these works nevertheless also offer reading pleasure to the 'average' reader who is willing to accept the author's somewhat ponderous style. In stark contrast to so much modern literature, Doderer's so-called 'Viennese' novels in particular are, for all their voluminousness, accessible for readers who do not have a degree in literature, who can simply ignore the rather turgid philosophical ballast and enjoy the wisdom of a creative mind steeped in the vast depths of the humanistic tradition; more importantly, the reader can become engrossed in the - apparently - straightforward, realistic narrative with its concrete plots (strictly taboo for so many of Doderer's fellow novelists), and its 'happy endings' to boot.



At the same time, the political climate in Germany in the 1950s was undoubtedly suited to Doderer's much vaunted 'a-political' stance. From the end of the Second World War till the early 1960s, German society was characterized by political disinterest and passivity, as people's thoughts were turned inwards, initially to more pressing, personal problems, and subsequently to the production of wealth, as the 'economic miracle' began to take shape. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, one of the co-founders of the 'Institut für Demoskopie' in Allensbach, has produced convincing evidence to suggest that the stereotype image we have today of the 'a-political' 1950s was borne out by reality. Noelle-Neumann illustrates, for instance, how in June 1952 no more than 27% of those questioned in a survey as to whether they were interested in politics in general answered yes.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, no fewer than 72% of those interviewed in May 1955 were unable to name the parliamentary representative for their own constituency (as opposed to 33% in Britain).<sup>4</sup> Finally, Noelle-Neumann relates how for one whole year in the 1950s the 'Süddeutscher Rundfunk' carried out a major experiment in adult education: every time the 'Bundesrat' was mentioned in a broadcast, a note was added expressly stating the function of this institution. In addition, special reports on the activities of the 'Bundesrat' were used to complement this attempt to make the public more politically informed. Yet statistics show that even after a year of conscious efforts to overcome the listeners' political apathy, the number of those who were able to tell more about the 'Bundesrat' than in the previous year had not even risen by one per cent. Noelle-Neumann is no doubt justified in concluding from this that the 'Bundesrat' quite simply did not fulfil a function which was subjectively important to the listeners.<sup>5</sup>

It is quite evident that Doderer's 'a-political' ideology, with its emphasis on continuity and the restoration of values, converged perfectly

with attitudes prevalent in Germany in the 1950s. What so many of Doderer's readers and critics failed to realize was that the author's highly respected aloofness from day-to-day political life in reality amounted to nothing less than total 'Weltfremdheit'. Doderer's inability or unwillingness to treat seriously the pressing problems of political reality is reflected throughout his published diaries,<sup>6</sup> but is perhaps most obvious in his answer to a questionnaire circulated and published by the magazine Die Kultur on anti-Semitic excesses in 1960. Whilst Heinrich Böll expresses his deep misgivings about the moral well-being of his fellow Germans and calls for a more open-minded approach to teaching recent German history in schools, Doderer answers as follows:

Die periodische Wiederkehr von auftretenden Zuständen in Form einer Art von Nachklang kann allgemein im persönlichen Leben des einzelnen und auch in der Geschichte beobachtet werden. Das rhythmische Grundelement dabei ist das Siebenjahr. Es sind vom Verschwinden der totalitären Macht in Mitteleuropa bis zu der plötzlichen Welle antisemitischer Exzesse genau vierzehn Jahre vergangen. (Ich folge hier den Forschungsergebnissen des Wiener Psychologen Professor Hermann Swoboda, wie er sie in seinem Hauptwerke Das Siebenjahr niedergelegt hat.)

Die wirkliche Diskutierung des Antisemitismus wäre eine so außerordentlich schwierige, daß sie niemals über einen kleinsten und exklusivsten Kreis hinausgetragen werden dürfte. Einen solchen Kreis stelle ich mir zusammengesetzt vor aus zwei Kardinälen oder Prälaten, zwei Rabbinern, einem Historiker und einem Schriftsteller.

Jede Diskussion auf breiterer Basis halte ich für ein Unglück (also auch Ihre Rundfrage) und sie kann nur unglückliche Folgen haben.

Leider haben die Ereignisse - meiner Ansicht nach ja nichts als ein periodischer Nachklang - verworrene Diskussion breitester Art zur Folge gehabt. Diese kann nur noch größeren Schaden stiften. Die Staatsgewalt darf sich an dieser Diskussion nicht

beteiligen und sie darf sich in eine solche niemals hineinziehen lassen. Vielmehr hätte ihre Reaktion in einem zwar schweigenden aber um so rücksichtsloseren und brutaleren Niederschlagen aller Randalierer zu bestehen.<sup>7</sup>

In his novels, too, Doderer scrupulously avoids any direct confrontation with the realities of political life in the 1950s or 1960s. By turning his attention to the specifically Austrian, Doderer also helped to pave the way for his own success. On the one hand, Doderer's emphasis on all that is Austrian coincided with a general upsurge of interest in the 'Donaumonarchie'; indeed, Walter Weiß goes so far as to say: '"Literarische Zusammenhänge zwischen dem alten und dem neuen Österreich" - das könnte man beinahe als Motto über die österreichische Literatur der fünfziger Jahre setzen.'<sup>8</sup> Much more importantly, by turning to the question of the continuity of the Austrian tradition (in Die Strudlhofstiege) and merely foreshadowing the ultimate disintegration of Austria with the 'Anschluss' (in Die Dämonen), Doderer conveniently evaded the problem of directly 'settling accounts' with the horrors of the Nazi era. In Doderer criticism one occasionally encounters the contention that by suppressing the realities of Nazism Doderer encapsulated the spirit of the age.<sup>9</sup> Yet Noelle-Neumann has argued persuasively that such claims that the 1950s were characterized by people's desire consciously or unconsciously to suppress the brutal truth about the recent past, are misleading. On the contrary, newspapers, magazines, radio and television all reported that any reference to the Nazi era was automatically the subject of special attention from the public (a morbid fascination which has held until today).<sup>10</sup> Yet, be that as it may, there can be little doubt that Doderer's special recipe for coming to terms with the Nazi past - indirectly, and by emphasizing individual as opposed to collective responsibility - satisfied a deep-rooted desire in Germans and Austrians

for simple and, above all, relatively painless explanations of the aberrations which had scarred their recent past.

Michael Hamburger has rightly suggested that in Die Dämonen Doderer 'de-demonizes evil by making it understandable'.<sup>11</sup> Yet Doderer's presentation of the destructive influences which were at work undermining the very basis of Austrian society in the inter-war years was a little too cosy, a little too 'gemütlich' for many readers to penetrate to the true significance of these 'everyday demons'. Although Die Dämonen was no doubt Doderer's most overtly political novel, it was, significantly, primarily as a chronicle of Viennese society, a 'continuation' of the epic saga initiated in Die Strudlhofstiege, that the novel was best remembered - at least until fairly recently.<sup>12</sup> When, within a few short years of its publication, Die Dämonen had become established as the canon according to which Doderer's subsequent productions were to be evaluated, it was not Doderer's concern with the deeper significance of the individual aberrations - as symbols of timeless, universal obsessions and ideologies - but, as we have seen in the reviews of Ein Mord den jeder begeht, and more particularly in those of Die Merowinger, the chronicle-like superficialities of Doderer's 'Viennese' novels that were prevalent in the critics' demands. It is clear, then, that what such critics did was to reflect back on a false, or at least distorted image of Doderer's 'Viennese' novels, and demand more of the same. We shall return to this image in due course.

With the ever-increasing demands for social and political commitment in literature in the 1960s, Doderer fell from literary favour fairly rapidly after his death in 1966. A look at the reception of Doderer's works in America shows that there, too, it was the novelist's lack of concern for political questions and the lack of direct social relevance of his novels, allied to Doderer's inveterate 'Vienneseness', that formed

the major obstacles for the American reader. Indeed, one might go so far as to postulate a direct inverse proportion between the appeal of Doderer's (superficially) a-political novels to war-weary Germans and Austrians in the 1950s, and the failure of these works to capture the imagination of a politically and socially committed American readership in the 1960s. More importantly, and perhaps for the same reasons, Doderer's novels also failed to satisfy the demands of German readers, fed on a diet of 'social realism' and on Grass's explosive 'Danzig trilogy', in the 1960s.

Yet the readability of Doderer's novels and the 'a-politicism' of his ideology contributed only partly to his popularity in the 1950s. Walter Weiß has rightly pointed out that, paradoxically, Doderer's publications since 1924 already contained the seeds of his success in the 1950s, at least in terms of motifs, characterization and structure.<sup>13</sup> Yet what Weiß failed to recognize was that there was at least one vital element missing from these publications, an element which was to play a key role in Doderer's reception from 1951 onwards, the date of the publication of Die Strudlhofstiege. That 'missing link' was the city of Vienna. Doderer's relationship to his native city is perhaps most aptly summed up in the following remark, which he recorded in his journal in February 1956: 'Das Gewicht von ein paar Gassen im III. Bezirk zu Wien ist heute noch enorm; und Überlegenheiten der verschiedensten Art, welche da auf uns stießen, haben bis heute noch sozusagen lebende Narben hinterlassen.'<sup>14</sup> Just like his fictional figure Conrad Castiletz, Doderer was never able to cast off the drippings of the bucket which had been plumped down over his head in those early childhood days in Vienna.

Doderer was most intensely fascinated by the aura of certain geographical locations in his native city: 'Am meisten beeindruckten mich immer - durch ihr unwiderstehliches Umfassen und Ansprechen - die genia loci. Sie sind und waren mir vielfach mehr als die genia und ingenia

personarum.'<sup>15</sup> The author's irrational fascination with the spirit of localities was justly rewarded when he discovered the wonders of the Strudlhofstiege and (or so he thought) unveiled its genius loci; in reality, of course, it was Doderer's richly symbolic presentation of the spirit of the Strudlhofstiege that created a genius loci perceptible for all his readers. Doderer himself came to regard the flight of stairs as the very essence of his writing: 'Was mir durch die "Stiege" geschenkt wurde ist fast das Zentrum der Substanz meines Schreibens überhaupt, das solchermaßen herauf trat: etwas wie ein sichtbar werdender Mittelpunkt.'<sup>16</sup> Yet whilst the 'Stiege' was quite literally a stepping-stone to literary fame for Doderer, its very 'concreteness' was to prove in the long run to be Doderer's curse. In an article on Die Strudlhofstiege, Wolfgang Paulsen asserted: 'Wien ist die Hauptgestalt in Doderers Roman und nicht etwa Melzer ...'<sup>17</sup> With the appearance of Die Strudlhofstiege, Doderer's work became synonymous with Vienna.

From 1951 onwards, then, Doderer's critics were at pains to point out that the author had painted a 'universal' picture of Vienna.<sup>18</sup> What so many of these critics failed to bear in mind was that, realistic, indeed naturalistic as Doderer's depictions of Vienna may be, his world remains a fictional world, constructed according to certain aesthetic principles. Hence, it is nonsensical for Ivar Ivask to declare: 'I certainly feel like a citizen of his [Doderer's] Vienna.'<sup>19</sup> Yet the critics' failure or refusal to distinguish between reality and fiction was not at all surprising, for Doderer drew very heavily on real-life models for his fictional characters. Indeed, as Schmidt-Dengler remarks, trying to uncover the models for Doderer's various figures became a popular pastime in Viennese society<sup>20</sup> - and, as we have seen, in Doderer criticism, too.

Much more decisive in the long run was the fact that the easily recognizable Viennese settings of Doderer's novels provoked a quite in-

adequate line in Doderer criticism which is still very much in evidence today, particularly in Engelbert Pfeiffer's monograph on Doderer's 'Alsergrund-Erlebnis'.<sup>21</sup> Having discovered that in front of the windows of the flat inhabited in Die Strudlhofstiege by the Pastré twins there lies, with an inscription no one could fail to see, the 'Sigmund-Freud-Hof', Pfeiffer goes on to conjecture:

Freud in die Metapher einzubringen, scheint auch im Zusammenhang mit Thea Rokitzer unternommen worden zu sein, die - St 819 - am 21. September 1925 um 17 Uhr unten an der Lände bange auf Melzer wartend, 'links ein vielstöckiges einzelstehendes Haus' sah. Das konnte nur der Sigmund-Freud-Hof sein, dessen turmartiger, hoher Eckbau von dort unten tatsächlich einzelstehend gesehen wird, eine vielbedeutende Vertikale vom Oben zum Unten bildend: auch hier ein Motiv und eine diskrete Respektserweisung dem Forschen Freuds gegenüber.<sup>22</sup>

Pfeiffer draws no further conclusions from his findings. Yet what does not appear to occur to critics like Pfeiffer, who choose to waste time discovering genuine 'Pastrée'sche Kanaldeckel' in Vienna,<sup>23</sup> is that any reader who has never been to Vienna cannot possibly be expected to appreciate the full implications of such an allusion; and, more to the point, whether such 'discreet' (i.e., utterly arcane) allusions are not, in themselves, a limitation to the 'universality' or indeed comprehensibility of Doderer's works.

In a letter to his wife in August 1882, Theodor Fontane laments an encounter with the wife of a well-known Jewish art professor:

Die Frau Professorin begrüßte mich sehr herzlich, zeigte mir die neueste Nummer der Vossin, und sagte: 'Eben hab' ich von Ihnen gelesen; sehen Sie hier; es ist so spannend, man kennt ja alle Straßennamen.' Dann brach das Gespräch glücklicher-

weise ab ... Nicht als ob ich der Frau zürnte; wie könnt' ich auch! Im Gegenteil, es ist mir bei aller Schmerzlichkeit in gewissem Sinne angenehm gewesen, mal so naiv sprechen zu hören. Im Irrtum über die Dinge zu bleiben, ist oft gut; aber klar zu sehen, ist oft auch gut. Das ist nun also das gebildete Publikum, für das man schreibt ...<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, there can be no doubt that for many of Doderer's readers and critics alike, one of the main attractions of the 'Viennese' novels is the surface-level accuracy of the portrayals of the city. Otto F. Beer, for instance, has the following to say about Die Dämonen: 'Für den Kenner Wiens gewinnt dieses Buch einen großen Teil seines Reizes aus dem Umstand, daß alles so genau stimmt: die Hügelpfade von Heiligenstadt ebenso wie die Inneneinrichtung eines bestimmten Cafés oder der Mechanismus, mit dem man das Portal der Universität verschließt.'<sup>25</sup>

In one of the many amusing asides in Die Wasserfälle von Slunj, the narrator re-iterates a hackneyed but nonetheless well-founded saying on the relationship between an author and his readers: 'Jedes Wirtshaus hat die Gäste, die es verdient, genau so, wie man einen Schriftsteller aus seinen Lesern zu erkennen vermag, ohne selbst von ihm noch eine Zeile gelesen zu haben.'<sup>26</sup> Although any modern readership is so heterogeneous that it is impossible to talk of 'the reader', the question nevertheless arises to what extent Doderer 'makes his readers',<sup>27</sup> or rather to what extent Doderer himself provokes readings on the level of the professor's wife whose naïvety so perplexed Theodor Fontane.

Whereas in Die Strudlhofstiege the structure of the novel dictates that the reader should experience the same chaos as Doderer's fictional characters experience, in Doderer's final, uncompleted cycle of novels the reader was expected to be able to see and make connections more clearly than the figures in the novels: 'der Blick vom apperzeptiven



Leser auf die deperzeptive Existenz: das ist R[oman No.] 7.'<sup>28</sup> However, those reviews of Die Wasserfälle von Slunj which are characterized by what we have called the 'sigh of relief' at Doderer's having returned to his 'classic' narrative style and setting, would appear to indicate that at least some of Doderer's readers had an eye for the wrong type of connections. Moreover, Wolfgang H. Fleischer relates how Doderer often received letters from a type of reader the author unceremoniously dubbed 'Strudlhof-ziegen':

Diese waren Leserinnen, deren Briefe nahezu unweigerlich mit dem Wortlaut begannen: 'Da ich im Jahre 1911 ebenfalls im IX. Bezirk gewohnt habe und dabei oft ... freut mich in Ihrem Roman ganz besonders, daß ...' und endeten womöglich mit der Angabe, in welchem, natürlich in den Romanen erwähnten Café besagte Ziege zu welcher Tageszeit zu verkehren pflege: 'Da wäre es doch schön, wenn ...'<sup>29</sup>

In the circumstances, one is tempted to recall Lichtenberg's well-known aphorism: 'Wenn ein Buch und ein Kopf zusammenstoßen und es klingt hohl, ist das allemal im Buch?'<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, although Doderer never tires of emphasizing the 'indifference' of the subject matter of his novels, the fact remains that it is possible to read his works as straightforward stories. That such a reading is 'inadequate' is obvious but of little relevance here, for if the reader is induced to take a 'more than indifferent' interest in the subject matter of Doderer's works, the author must accept the reproach that he has not succeeded in making the subject matter indifferent. On the contrary, as we have seen throughout this study, it is above all the surface-level meaning of Doderer's novels that irritates or fascinates the critics, and this, in turn, invariably determines their evaluation

of the author's artistic capabilities.

. The novelist Gerhard Fritsch is one of the few who admit having succumbed to the superficial fascination of Doderer's novels: '... daß ich um meinetwillen und etlicher vertaner (verschriebener) Zeit wegen bedauere, Doderers Romane zunächst vor allem mit der Freude an Details, Skurrilitäten usw. gelesen zu haben und kurioserweise nicht sofort die Machart in ihrer ganzen Bedeutung, für jede Beschäftigung mit dem Erzählen mit den Fingern gegriffen zu haben.'<sup>31</sup> Much more symptomatic of the critics' response to the subject matter of Doderer's novels is the following comment by Harald Kaufmann: 'Der Lesende kann überall beginnen, das Vorangegangene ist nicht Voraussetzung des Folgenden, der Autor springt ... quer durch die Zeitläufe, die Orte, die Personen: genauso, wie man mit guten Freunden im Kaffeehaus Konversation macht.'<sup>32</sup> And it was the highly digressive, almost chatty tone of the narrative in Doderer's 'Viennese' novels that earned the author the unfortunate and unwarranted reputation of being something of a 'coffee-house sage'. Ignoring the formal function of the somewhat disjointed narrative - as a reflection of the 'chaos' of life - the critics took the inveterate chattiness as evidence that Doderer was little more than a congenial Viennese raconteur, and it was small wonder that the author came out of the whole affair with more than a little 'Sachertorte' on his face. It was obviously Doderer's propensity for digression and long-windedness that induced Hans Heinz Hahn to talk of the author's 'Tratsch-Epen',<sup>33</sup> Wilhelm Müller of a 'Makrokosmos hemmungslosen Gebrabbels',<sup>34</sup> Harry T. Moore of a 'chorale of chitchat',<sup>35</sup> and one anonymous wit to dub Die Dämonen the 'Ninth Symphony of Viennese gossip'.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the tendency towards melodrama and the hint of sensationalism which inform the plots of Doderer's novels give rise to more than occasional accusations of 'Kolportage'.<sup>37</sup> Finally, it is surely only the subject matter of Doderer's novels that can account for the

following acerbic comment by Ernst Stein: 'Doderer ist der Musil des kleinen Mannes.'<sup>38</sup>

When Goethe had finished writing Die Leiden des jungen Werthers, he gave the novel to some young friends of his to read, but was shocked and perplexed by their reactions:

Freilich war es hier abermals der Stoff, der eigentlich die Wirkung hervorbrachte, und so waren sie gerade in einer der meinigen entgegengesetzten Stimmung: denn ich hatte mich durch diese Komposition, mehr als durch jede andere, aus einem stürmischen Elemente gerettet ... Wie ich mich nun aber dadurch erleichtert und aufgeklärt fühlte, die Wirklichkeit in Poesie verwandelt zu haben, so verwirrten sich meine Freunde daran, indem sie glaubten, man müsse die Poesie in Wirklichkeit verwandeln, einen solchen Roman nachspielen und sich allenfalls selbst erschießen; und was hier im Anfang unter wenigen vorging, ereignete sich nachher im großen Publikum, und dieses Büchlein, was mir so viel genützt hatte, ward als höchst schädlich verurufen.<sup>39</sup>

Although Werther established the young author as a literary celebrity and provoked a veritable wave of 'Wertherfieber' throughout Europe at one stroke, the success of the novel was evidently based on an 'inadequate' reading of the text. In later years, a somewhat disillusioned Goethe was moved to remark: 'Man kann von dem Publikum nicht verlangen, daß es ein geistiges Werk geistig aufnehmen solle.'<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, Goethe did learn his own lesson from this 'gescheiterte Kommunikation mit dem großen Publikum', as Hannelore Link puts it.<sup>41</sup> For in 1782-83 and 1786 the author carried out compositional and stylistic changes in the novel in an attempt to facilitate an 'adequate' reading of the text: the figure of Werther was made more problematic, so that it would no longer be so easy for the reader to identify himself with him.

It might be reasonable to expect Doderer to have been equally aware of the fact that the 'interesting' subject matter and style of his 'Viennese' novels induced, perhaps even invited distorted or 'inadequate' interpretations. Indeed, one might well interpret Die Merowinger as a provocative attempt by Doderer to break out of the straitjacket of the 'Viennese' schemata by confronting 'his' readership (and, as we have seen, Die Merowinger was clearly aimed at the reader who was familiar with Doderer's 'Viennese' novels) with a far less congenial subject matter and style. Yet, at the same time, and quite paradoxically, far from trying to stand apart from the superficialities of his 'Viennese' novels, Doderer consciously nurtured the myth that fact and fiction were interchangeable. Whether it was the cigarette-box with the engraved dedication from one of his characters to the author,<sup>42</sup> or Doderer's not infrequent pilgrimages to the 'Stiege', where he could move friends and acquaintances to tears with a wistful 'Servus Melzer',<sup>43</sup> or the occasional 'guided tours' of the settings of Die Strudlhofstiege, which Doderer reserved for privileged readers:<sup>44</sup> such gestures all combined to create and perpetuate what one might call a 'Doderer myth'. Armin Mohler remarks that anyone who experienced Doderer in the guise of a 'tourist guide' could see in him the tragic figure of an ageing author who had outlived his best works.<sup>45</sup> Yet this was only partly true, for in Die Wasserfälle von Slunj and more particularly Der Grenzwald Doderer showed that he had embarked upon a tetralogy which had the potential not only to match but even to surpass his achievement in the 'Viennese' novels. However, what Doderer did by consciously identifying himself with the concrete localities from these 'Viennese' novels was to live up to his image of a somewhat scurrilous Viennese 'Rosenkavalier' who might have descended from the pages of one of his own novels. When Doderer died in 1966 he had become something of an institution in Vienna, respected, indeed revered by many of his fellow

citizens as a synonym for a nostalgic, operetta-like world on the Blue Danube, a world which, paradoxically, he had never portrayed in his novels.

It is worth recalling how, as early as 1960, Herbert Eisenreich had averred: 'Einen schlimmen Dienst hat man unserem Autor erwiesen, als man begann, ihn zum literarischen Ur-Wiener zu stempeln. Was für ein Mißverständnis! Es sei denn, man begreife unter dem Wesen des Wienerischen die Einschmelzung vieler Welten in eine neue, ganz und gar einzigartige, politisch und geographisch kaum lokalisierbare Form (aber wer begreift's schon so immateriell?).'<sup>46</sup> Doderer's misfortune, but one for which he was not only partly responsible, but which he positively cultivated, was that the centre of his artistic universe was too 'material', could be too easily located to Vienna, and that he himself could be too easily identified with it.

If the author found it difficult to detach himself from the superficialities of his 'Viennese' novels, this was true to an even greater extent of his critics - on more than one level. On the surface level, there developed a veritable cult of the Strudlhofstiege, with progress reports on the condition of the steps,<sup>47</sup> and laments that the kiosks in the surrounding neighbourhood did not offer postcards of the 'Stiege'.<sup>48</sup> What such critics failed to realize was that by constantly identifying Doderer with the concrete settings of his novels, they necessarily shortened the universal significance of these works and highlighted their apparent parochialism. In 1973 one of Doderer's most perspicacious critics, Armin Mohler, proposed a radical solution to solve the problem: 'Vielleicht sollte man die Stiege einreißen. Man würde dann dem von einer kleinen Sekte gehegten Vorurteil, Heimito von Doderer sei ein Wiener Heimatdichter (wenn auch höheren Grades) gewesen, wenigstens diesen berühmten Boden entziehen.'<sup>49</sup> The paradox of Doderer's 'Viennese' novels is that whilst the reader who is familiar with Vienna necessarily under-

stands and appreciates a lot more than any one who has never set foot in the city, he is at the same time sorely tempted to dwell on Doderer's fascinatingly accurate epic re-creation of the atmosphere of Vienna, rather than proceed to the true meaning of the novels.

On a more subtle level, the influence of the superficialities of Doderer's 'Viennese' novels made itself felt in the critics' expectations and demands of any works which appeared in the wake of the so-called 'Viennese trilogy'. As we have seen, the reviews of Ein Mord den jeder begeht and above all of Die Merowinger were characterized by what E.D. Hirsch calls 'critical monism - that lazy habit of mind which persistently applies the same approach and the same criteria to all texts. Such monism is generally based upon some prior definition of good literature: good literature is always original or ironic or visionary or compact or sincere or impersonal or what have you.'<sup>50</sup> In Doderer's case, good literature was 'Viennese'. It is obvious that any author who has once been successful with a particular schema will be encouraged, perhaps even pressurized by his publisher, critics and readers to repeat the successful formula. At the same time, when an author has established his position and become associated with a clearly recognizable 'image', he runs the risk of alienating himself from 'his' readership if he fails to produce what is expected of him. In his study of Lord Byron as a best-selling author, Thilo von Bremen recounts how one of Byron's publishers, John Murray, carefully manipulated his author's production to concur with prevailing literary tastes by repeatedly delaying the publication of works which he felt might be detrimental to the author's reputation.<sup>51</sup> When with Don Juan Byron liberated himself from the tried and tested pattern, he cut across the grain of the 'Byronism' mode which he personified, and the unfavourable reaction which the first two cantos of this publication provoked reflected the readers' unwillingness to have their 'myths' des-

troyed - even by the creator of the myth himself.

The parallel to Doderer is quite evident. It would be illuminating to discover how Doderer's publishers reacted when they were confronted with the later stories from Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen and with Die Merowinger, but changes in personnel over the last twenty years make this impossible today. Yet be that as it may, the critical response to Die Merowinger reflects just how close Doderer came to alienating himself from his readers by producing a novel which did not correspond with the latter's monistic preconceptions of how Doderer should write and what he should write about.' Like Byron with Childe Harold or Goethe with Werther, Doderer had produced a work (or rather what the critics misguidedly took to be a trilogy - Die Strudlhofstiege, Die erleuchteten Fenster and Die Dämonen) which was to cast its long shadow over all his subsequent publications. What was so insidious about this development was that it was primarily the subject matter, the congenial narrative tone and the topographical setting of Doderer's 'Viennese' novels rather than their aesthetic quality that determined the critics' demands.

Although the 'Viennese' novels undoubtedly appeared at precisely the right time for author and readers alike, these novels paradoxically contained the seeds for Doderer's ultimate disappearance into relative literary obscurity. Yet anyone who was to base his opinion of the German literary scene in the 1950s and the early 1960s solely on the impression given by the reviews of Doderer's works in those years, might be forgiven for assuming that Doderer was the unchallenged grand old man of German literature for one and a half decades, standing aloof from ephemeral literary phenomena such as the 'Gruppe 47'. In reality, however, Doderer's literary standing was never as undisputed as the reviewers profess. This discrepancy again raises the vexed question of the value of literary reviewing.

The author Robert Neumann relates the amusing anecdote of how, after he himself had written the 'Klappentext' for one of his works, one unsuspecting reader had congratulated him on the highly positive review of his book that had appeared in the newspaper that morning. In reality, what the enthusiastic reader had seen was an advertisement for the book, which cited Neumann's self-congratulatory 'Klappentext'. There is more than a grain of truth in Neumann's ironic conclusion:

Man kann Zeitungsleser einteilen in Garagisten - bei denen sich schon am Tag des Erscheinens der Unterschied zwischen Kritik und Inserat im Erinnerungsbild verwischt - und in Intellektuelle. In ihrem Gedächtnis verwischt sich der Unterschied erst innerhalb einer Woche. Die einzigen, auf die das nicht zutrifft, sind a) der Autor selbst und b) der Kritiker selbst. Diese beiden leiden mitunter auch noch nach einem vollen Monat unter der Halluzination, als wäre eine Kritik etwas anderes als ein Inserat.<sup>52</sup>

For it is a sad fact of journalistic life that, particularly in the case of smaller, provincial newspapers, book reviews are written by overworked and underpaid editors, who are almost totally dependent on what the publishers suggest they should write. It is not, however, the 'Klappentext', which is, of course, 'public property', but the 'Verlagsprospekt', on which such reviewers rely so heavily. This is true on various levels of the reviews which appear in more illustrious publications, too. E.D. Hirsch has argued convincingly that an interpreter's 'preliminary generic conception of a text is constitutive of everything that he subsequently understands and ... this remains the case unless and until that generic conception is altered'.<sup>53</sup> In our examination of the reception of Ein Mord den jeder begeht we have tried to illustrate how this 'preliminary generic conception' is totally open to manipulation by the publishers. Hence, our interpretation of the 'detective element' in Ein Mord den jeder begeht



might be regarded as a somewhat belated, but nonetheless necessary revision of the traditional generic conception of the novel. If in this 'corrective' the detective element in the novel was overemphasized, this was a deliberate exercise designed to redress a long-standing but unjustified underemphasis. The reproach implicit in the discussion of the detective element in Ein Mord den jeder begeht was not aimed at the publishers, whose task it is, after all, to sell books, but at the reviewers, for their uncritical acceptance of what the publishers said, and at a system which supports such 'opinionless opinion-makers'.

With the emphasis being placed more and more on what is saleable, the reviewer is fast becoming a mere cog in the sales promotion machinery, although many critics still harbour the illusion that they alone are manipulating and are not subject to manipulation. The palpable weaknesses in the reviewing 'industry' have led to appeals from sociologically orientated literary theorists such as Bernhard Zimmermann for collectives to be established to examine the manipulatory mechanisms at work in literary production and reception.<sup>54</sup> Others have suggested that the reviewers should use their reviews to draw their readers' attention to any form of manipulation practised by the publishers.<sup>55</sup> A simpler but much more effective solution to the problem would be for reviewers merely to ignore the publishers' propaganda and come to their own conclusions about the aesthetic value of any book they review - but this will no doubt remain a utopian dream.

## Notes

1. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, 'Heimito von Doderers schriftstellerische Anfänge. Anmerkungen zu unbekannten Publikationen des Autors', Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur (Wien), 16 (1972), 98-110 (p.98).
2. Michael Bachem, Heimito von Doderer, Boston (Twayne), 1981, p.10.
3. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, 'Der Staatsbürger und sein Staat', in Zwanzig Jahre danach: Eine deutsche Bilanz 1945-1965. Achtund-dreißig Beiträge deutscher Wissenschaftler, Schriftsteller und Publizisten, edited by Helmut Hammerschmidt, München/Wien/Basel (Desch), 1965, pp.81-104 (p.101).
4. Ibid., p.89.
5. Ibid., pp.89-90.
6. See, for example, Heimito von Doderer, Tangenten: Tagebuch eines Schriftstellers 1940-1950, München (Biederstein), 1964, pp.118, 328-329, 368, 467; Heimito von Doderer, Commentarii 1951 bis 1956: Tagebücher aus dem Nachlaß, edited by Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, München (Biederstein), 1976, pp.176, 364, 367-368.
7. Heimito von Doderer, 'Es geht uns alle an', Die Kultur (München, Wien, Basel), 8 (1960), p.3; Böll's answer is on the same page.
8. Walter Weiß, 'Die Literatur der Gegenwart in Österreich', in Deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur: Ausgangsposition und aktuelle Entwicklungen, edited by Manfred Durzak, Stuttgart (Reclam), 1981, pp.602-619 (p.605).
9. See, for example, Karl M. Benedek, 'Heimito Doderer oder: Die Ideologie der Ideologielosigkeit', Tagebuch (Wien), February 1958; Walter Weiß, 'Zwischenbilanz. Österreichische Beiträge zur Gegenwartsliteratur', in Zwischenbilanz: Eine Anthologie österreichischer Gegenwartsliteratur, edited by Walter Weiß and Sigrid Schmid, paperback edition, München (dtv no.1410), 1978, pp.11-29 (p.17); Hans Joachim Schröder, Apperzeption und Vorurteil: Untersuchungen zur Reflexion Heimito von Doderers, Heidelberg (Winter), 1976, pp.400-401.
10. Noelle-Neumann, 'Der Staatsbürger und sein Staat', op. cit., p.91.
11. Michael Hamburger, From Prophecy to Exorcism, London (Longmans), 1965, p.139.
12. Compare, for example, Henry Hatfield: 'His [Doderer's] two most ambitious novels, Die Strudlhofstiege (1951) and Die Dämonen (1956), are long, rich, admirably plotted narratives about twentieth century Vienna.' (Henry Hatfield, Modern German Literature: The Major Figures in Context, London (Edward Arnold), 1966, p.133.) Anton Reininger and Hans Joachim Schröder have done much in recent years to redress the balance and put the political ideology behind Die Dämonen in perspective.
13. Weiß, 'Die Literatur der Gegenwart in Österreich', op. cit., p.605.
14. Doderer, Commentarii 1951 bis 1956, op. cit., p.502.
15. Ibid., p.265.

16. Doderer, Tangenten, op. cit., p.724.
17. Wolfgang Paulsen, 'Deutsch-österreichischer Zeitroman: Zu Heimito von Doderers Roman Die Strudlhofstiege', Symposium (New York), 10 (1956), no.2, 217-230 (p.221).
18. See, for instance, Manfred Durzak, 'Die deutsche Literatur', in Moderne Weltliteratur: Die Gegenwartsliteraturen Europas und Amerikas, edited by Gero von Wilpert and Ivar Ivask, Stuttgart (Kröner), 1978, pp.542-641 (p.614); Herbert Eisenreich, on Doderer, in Lexikon der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur, founded by Hermann Kunisch, revised and edited by Herbert Wiesner, München (Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung), 1981, pp.110-112 (p.111).
19. Ivar Ivask, 'A Winter with Heimito', in 'An International Symposium in Memory of Heimito von Doderer (1896-1966)', Books Abroad (Norman, Okl.), 42 (1968), no.3, 343-384 (pp.346-348).
20. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, 'Aus dem Quellgebiet der Dämonen Heimito von Doderers. Anmerkungen zu Tagebuchaufzeichnungen des Autors aus dem Jahre 1951', Literatur und Kritik (Salzburg), 8 (1973), 578-598 (p.579).
21. Engelbert Pfeiffer, Heimito von Doderers Alsergrund-Erlebnis, Wien (Selbstverlag Dr. Engelbert Pfeiffer), 1983.
22. Ibid., p.71.
23. Ibid., p.70.
24. Theodor Fontane, Briefe I: Briefe an den Vater, die Mutter und die Frau, edited by Kurt Schreinert, Berlin (Propyläen), 1968, p.176.
25. Otto F. Beer, 'Heimito von Doderers neuer Roman. Die Dämonen von "Döbling"', Der Standpunkt (Meran), 30 November 1956.
26. Heimito von Doderer, Roman No.7: Erster Teil. Die Wasserfälle von Slunj, München (Biederstein), 1963, p.291.
27. Henry James, extract from 'The Novels of George Eliot', in Henry James, Theory of Fiction, edited by James E. Miller Jr, Lincoln (University of Nebraska Press), 1972, p.321.
28. Heimito von Doderer, 'Commentarii', volume XVI, p.120 (unpublished). Cited by Lutz-Werner Wolff, in Wiedereroberte Außenwelt: Studien zur Erzählweise Heimito von Doderers am Beispiel des 'Romans No.7', Göttingen (Kümmerle), 1969, p.113.
29. Wolfgang H. Fleischer, 'Von Doderer zu Pelimbert', in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer, edited by Xaver Schaffgotsch, München (Biederstein), 1972, pp.48-61 (p.59).
30. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, Aphorismen, Briefe, Satiren, edited by Herbert Nette, Stuttgart/Hamburg (Deutscher Bücherbund), 1962, p.48.
31. Gerhard Fritsch, 'Nachtrag zu einem Gespräch. Zum 70. Geburtstag Heimito von Doderers am 5. September', Die Furche (Wien), 3 September 1966.
32. Harald Kaufmann, 'Blätter auf Heimito von Doderers Grab', Neue Zeit (Graz), 28 December 1966.
33. Hans Heinz Hahn, 'Heimito Doderer - der letzte Romancier', Arbeiter-Zeitung (Wien), 6 September 1966.

34. Wilhelm Müller, 'Heimito von Doderer: Die Dämonen', Bücherei und Bildung (Reutlingen, Bremen), 9 (1957), no.8-9, p.364.
35. Harry T. Moore, Twentieth Century German Literature, London (Heinemann), 1971, p.190.
36. Cited by anonymous, 'Tale from the Vienna Woods', Time (New York), 13 October 1961, p.102.
37. See, for instance, Konrad Stemmer, 'Ein großer deutscher Roman?', Der Tagesspiegel (Berlin), 9 September 1951; Helmut A. Fiechtner, 'Heimito von Doderer. Staatspreisträger 1958 und Nobelpreiskandidat', Die Furche (Wien), 22 March 1958; Robert Haerdter, 'Kunstlandschaft des Geschriebenen', Die Gegenwart (Frankfurt am Main), 22 September 1956; Hans Schwarz, 'Dämonen 1927', Schwäbische Landeszeitung (Augsburg), 8 December 1956.
38. Ernst Stein, 'Alte Schubladen verschiedenen Inhalts. Zwei österreichische Erzähler: Heimito von Doderer und Leo Perutz', Die Zeit (Hamburg), 30 October 1959.
39. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit. Dritter Teil, 13. Buch, in Goethes Werke, edited by Erich Trunz and Lieselotte Blumenthal, 14 volumes, Hamburg (Wegner), 1955, IX, 588.
40. Ibid., p.590.
41. Hannelore Link, Rezeptionsforschung: Eine Einführung in Methoden und Probleme, Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln/Mainz (Kohlhammer), 1976, p.57.
42. See Herbert Eisenreich, 'Licht + Schatten = mehr Licht', in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer, op. cit., pp.39-47 (p.42).
43. See Eisenreich, 'Licht + Schatten', op. cit., p.42; Hans Flesch von Brunnigen, 'Heimito', in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer, op. cit., pp.62-72 (p.69); Walter Rilla, 'Servus Melzer', in Erinnerungen an Heimito von Doderer, op. cit., pp.115-124 (p.115).
44. See Armin Mohler, 'Erkenntnis vollzieht sich nur in Sprache. Wiener Romancier und Philosoph: zum Tode Heimito von Doderers', Die Welt (Hamburg), 27 December 1966.
45. Ibid.
46. Herbert Eisenreich, 'Heimito von Doderer oder die Vereinbarkeit des Unvereinbaren', introduction to Heimito von Doderer, Wege und Umwege, edited by Herbert Eisenreich, Graz/Wien (Stiasny), 1960, pp.5-24 (p.10).
47. See, for instance, Gotthard Böhm, 'Die Strudlhofstiege liegt unberührt', Rheinischer Merkur (Koblenz), 11 November 1966.
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49. Armin Mohler, 'Dichter am Ende des Tunnels', Die Welt (Hamburg), 15 February 1973.
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51. Thilo von Bremen, Lord Byron als Erfolgsautor: Leser und Literatur im frühen 19. Jahrhundert, Wiesbaden (Akademische Verlagsgesell-

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54. Bernhard Zimmermann, Literaturrezeption im historischen Prozeß. Zur Theorie einer Rezeptionsgeschichte der Literatur, München (Beck), 1977, p.32.
55. See, for example, Helmut A. Braem, 'Unwissenheit über die Zukunft der Literaturkritik', in Kritik der Literaturkritik, edited by Olaf Schwencke, Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln/Mainz (Kohlhammer), 1973, pp.104-108 (p.108).

